FAMOUS BOOKS

SKETCHES IN THE HIGHWAYS AND BYEWAYS OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

By W. DAVENPORT ADAMS

BIBLIOTECA PUBLICA

"Sed pleni sunt omnes libri, plenæ sapientium voces, [illegible] exemplorum vetustas; quæ jacerent in tenebris omnia, nisi litterarum [illegible]en accederet."
Archia, vi. 14.

Fomo 287

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Dedicated,

BY PERMISSION, AND WITH RESPECTFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

TO

MATTHEW ARNOLD, M.A., LL.D.,

SOMETIME PROFESSOR OF POETRY AT OXFORD.

PREFACE.

BELIEVING that in an Englishman's education a foremost place should be given to the patient study of his country's literature, and that he ought to gain an intimate acquaintance with at least the masterpieces of that literature before he adventures into wider fields, I have endeavoured in the following pages to sketch the history, character, and tendency of some of our most Famous Books in such a manner as to afford an introduction to their careful and systematic investigation on the part of the young student and the general reader.

It is obvious that, in the space at my disposal, I could do no more than make a *selection* from the great works in our language; but I trust the selection is one of which the critics and the public will not disapprove. It will be observed that each of those adopted has a special claim on our consideration, either, as I have said elsewhere, on account of its intrinsic qualities, or on account of the light it sheds

upon the character of the man and of the age by whom and in which it was produced. There are, indeed, many others which I should gladly have included; but my object has been rather to describe those Books which are Famous without being very widely read, than those which are at once Famous and familiar as household words. Hence, I have omitted two such works as "The Travels of Lemuel Gulliver," and "The Pilgrim's Progress;" and if I have included "Robinson Crusoe" and "The Essays of Elia," it is because the latter is scarcely a "popular book," in the usual sense of the term, and because much of the information here given about the former is probably not known to the majority of those who run and read.

On the whole, I trust that, as I have spared no pains to make my book at once accurate and interesting, it may receive a kindly welcome, and may accomplish something towards the promotion of that critical appreciation of our literary masterpieces which, in this age of superficial reading, appears to be less general than could be desired.

W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.

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ROGER ASCHAM AND LADY JANE GREY.

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XXXIVE.2



SOME FAMOUS BOOKS.

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MORE'S "UTOPIA."

It will generally be found, I think, in considering any great classic work of art or literature, that it proceeded from a man and from an age peculiarly fitted for the production of such a work, and that it is of value, therefore, not only on account of its intrinsic qualities, but on account of the light it sheds upon the character of the man and of the age by whom and in which it was produced. Thus, the "Utopia" of Sir Thomas More interests us not more as one of the most striking of our English classics, than as a valuable illustration of the times in which it was written, and of the genius by whom it was composed.

That it should have issued from the England of King Henry VIII. is a fact which seems at first sight scarcely to admit of explanation; but when we come to look more deeply into the circumstances of the case, it is obvious that the period was extremely favourable, and that the author was especially fitted for the task he

set before himself. The age of Henry VIII. was that in which Skelton directed his bitterly sarcastic satires against the corruptions of the Court and Church; and in England, as well as on the Continent, the people were beginning to express in words, if not in deeds, those aspirations towards civil and religious freedom which had slumbered since the days of Wickcliffe. What more natural than that Thomas More, the scholar, the lawyer, and the politician—who had known what it was to enjoy the friendship of Erasmus, and who, though by no means a Reformer in the sense that Luther was a Reformer, was a more than usually enlightened Churchman—should be moved by the spirit of the age, as well as by his own humorous and philosophic fancy, to construct on paper a Vision of a Perfect Commonwealth, wherein, without apparently aiming at any practical results, he could direct the shafts of his satire against the corruptions of his age and country? There can be no doubt, I think, that though Sir Thomas More was unable to go the whole length of the Lutheran controversy—though he was steadfast in maintaining the supremacy of the Pope in all ecclesiastical matters—he was so far imbued with the *zeit-geist* or spirit of his time that he sincerely reprobated the evils he saw around him, and was willing to go a long way—not so far, indeed, as his countryman, Tyndale, but so far as his illustrious friend Erasmus—in the work of correcting them. It is true that he publicly advocated the persecution of the Reformers, from a feeling, doubtless, that they went too fast and furiously, and that they transgressed the laws of fairness and consideration which he has laid down in his

"Utopia." But he seems to have been perfectly willing that the Scriptures, properly translated and revised, should be spread abroad among the people; and, if he finally turned his back upon the party of progress, it was not because he was fanatically opposed to change—we shall see, by-and-by, that in his "Utopia" he goes even farther than the most philosophical Radicals of the present day—but because he was, like the great majority of his countrymen then as now, enamoured of the *via media*—the path of moderation, which we have the authority of Horace for declaring to be the safest to tread.

The idea of the "Utopia" was probably taken mainly from the "Republic" of Plato,* but it is not unlikely that Sir Thomas was acquainted with many other of those ideal schemes of perfect societies which have existed from the era of Hippodamos to the present time. The latter philosopher was an architect by profession, and is known in history as the designer of the town of Peiræus, but we are told he was ambitious of reaching eminence in all kinds of knowledge, and he is described by Aristotle† as "the first author who wrote a treatise concerning the best form of government." The scheme of Phaleas of Chalcedon, also mentioned by Aristotle,‡ was apparently directed towards the equalisation of property, and is far less remarkable than the famous fragment of Theopompus of Chios,§ in which a number of extraordinary relations of this kind are collected under the title of *Θαυμασια*.

* Hallam, "Literature of Europe."
† "Politics," ii. 5.
‡ *Ibid.*, ii. 4.
§ See Smith's "Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography."

In this writer, as in Plato, we discover glimpses of a knowledge of the great western continent, which afterwards re-appeared in Pulci,* and may probably have led, though indirectly, to the eventual discovery of America by Columbus. Euhemeros, the author of "Panchaia," founds his imaginary commonwealth in a different quarter of the globe;† but it is remarkable that he places it, as More places his, upon an island, and in that very Indian Ocean in which "Utopia" is said to lie.

This famous work seems to have owed its immediate origin to an embassy in which More was engaged in 1515. He had always been a favourite with Henry VIII., who, with all his faults, was able to recognise merit when he saw it; and in the year I mention he was sent, in company with Cuthbert Tunstall, afterwards Bishop of Durham, and others, to confer with the ambassadors of Charles V., then Archduke of Austria, on the question of a renewal of alliance. And "since our business did admit of it," he says, "I went to Antwerp," where, among the many who visited the distinguished Englishman, was one whom he describes as "more acceptable to him than any other"—one

* In the "Morgante Maggiore," cited by Prescott in his "History of the Reigns of Ferdinand and Isabella:"—

> "His bark
> The daring mariner shall urge far o'er
> The western wave, a smooth and level plain,
> Albeit the earth is fashioned like a wheel.
> Men shall descry another hemisphere," &c.

Few things are more clear than that the idea of a western hemisphere was familiar to the minds of Europeans in the fifteenth century. Great man as Columbus was, undoubtedly, he could scarcely have evolved the existence of America out of his own inner consciousness. But he had the genius to seize and act upon the conception already floating in the popular mind.

† St. John, Preliminary Discourse to "Utopia."

Peter Giles (afterwards Latinised into Ægidius), "a man of great honour, and of good rank in his town," with whom, it would appear from a letter of More to Erasmus,* the former contracted a close and enduring intimacy. It was at Antwerp, about the month of November, and probably after many interesting conversations with his new acquaintance, that More wrote the second book of his "Utopia," the first being composed at London in the early part of 1516. In October of the latter year More wrote to Erasmus to say how glad he was to hear that Ægidius liked his "Nusquama" (as it was sometimes called), and his anxiety to know what Tunstall and other judges thought of it. On November 12, Gerardus Noviomagus (that is, Gerard Bonchrost, of Nimeguen) wrote to Erasmus from Louvain to say that his friend Theodoricus (or Theodore Martin) would gladly undertake to print the work, and that Paludanus would show him an engraving of the island by a great painter, in which Erasmus could, if he desired, make any alterations. A few days later Erasmus was able to assure the author that his manuscript was in the printer's hands, and about the same time Jerome Buslidanus (or Busleyden), another of More's continental friends and admirers, added his meed of praise to the commendation already bestowed upon this the latest of the perfect commonwealths.

By-and-by the "Utopia" made its appearance from the press of Theodoricus: "*libellus vere aureus nec minus salutaris quam festinus de optimo reip. statu.*

* "Letters and Papers, Foreign and Domestic, of the Reign of Henry VIII." Arranged and catalogued by the Rev. J. S. Brewer. 1864.

deque rova Insula Utopia." It had no pagination.* First came the picture-chart of the island above referred to; then the Utopian alphabet, in which A to L are represented by circles or curves, M by a triangle, and N to Y by rectangles or portions of rectangles, dashes being used in connection with them for the sake of further diversity; then "a shorte meter of Utopia, written by Anemolius," the poet laureate; then a letter from Ægidius "to the right honourable Hierome Buslyde, provost Arienn, and counselloure to the catholike kinge Charles;" then another letter to the same individual from Paludanus,† who also contributes a poem which has never, I believe, appeared in English; then some verses "De Utopia," by Noviomagus; then the poem "Ad Lectorem," by Cornelius Graphæus,‡ then Bousleyden's letter to Thomas More; then More's letter to Ægidius, from which I shall be quoting by-and-by; and then the text of the two books themselves.

Such was the first edition of More's "Utopia," which seems to have been saluted on all sides by a chorus of decided admiration. In the course of next year More is found writing to Tunstall, to say that his letters are the most delightful he ever received from him, because they speak so highly of his "Republica." He trusts they are as sincere as they are candid. He was afraid that, among his many avocations, he would not have had time for such trifles, nor would he have done so but for his partial friendship. On February 24, Erasmus

* Arber's "English Reprints:" More's "Utopia," trans. by Robinson.
† "An ancient friend" of Erasmus.
‡ Or Schryver, Secretary to the Municipality of Antwerp in 1533.

begs William Cope to send for More's "Utopia," if he has not read it, and if he wishes to see the true source of all political evils.* He writes to the author to say that a burgomaster at Antwerp is so pleased with the work that he knows it all by heart. We cannot wonder, therefore, if More is delighted with the success of his production, and that he assures Erasmus, with a touch of his accustomed wit, that he is in the clouds with the dream of the government to be offered him by his Utopians; that he fancies himself a grand potentate, with a crown and a Franciscan cloak (*paludamentum*), followed by a grand procession of the Amauri. Should it please Heaven to exalt him to this high dignity, where he will be too high to think of common acquaintances, he will still keep a corner in his heart for Erasmus and Tunstall; and should they pay him a visit to Utopia, he will make all his subjects honour them as befits the friends of majesty.

No sooner was the first edition of "Utopia" published, than a second was undertaken by an Englishman called Thomas Lupset, who caused it to be printed at Paris by a certain Gilles de Gourmont before March, 1518. This, however, was not an authorised edition, issued under the direction of the author. The third, and apparently the most sumptuous edition of the "Utopia," was that revised by More at the request of Erasmus, and printed by Frobenius at Basle, in the November of 1518. In this, the letter and poem of

* "Erasmus confidently observed to an intimate friend" (what is sufficiently obvious to the most uncritical perception) "that the second book having been written before the first, had occasioned some disorder and inequality of style; but he particularly praised its novelty and originality, and its keen satire on the vices and absurdities of Europe."—MACKINTOSH.

Paludanus are omitted, and in their stead is inserted letters from Erasmus to Frobenius, and from Bude* to Lupset. The fourth edition was issued at Vienna in 1519.

Curiously enough, no English version of "Utopia" was published in the lifetime of the writer. The earliest in point of time is that which appeared in 1551, under the title of "A fruteful and pleasaunt worke of the best state of a publique weale, and of the new yle called Utopia: written in Latine by Syr Thomas More knyght, and translated into Englyshe by Raphe Robynson Citizein and Goldsmythe of London, at the procurement, and earnest request of George Fadlowe, Citezein and Haberdassher of the same Citie. Imprinted At London by Abraham Wele, dwelling in Pauls Churcheyarde at the sygne of the Lambe."† On the title-page of the second and revised edition, issued in the following year, Robinson figures as "sometime fellowe of Corpus Christi College, in Oxford," and his version has certainly the merit of being plain and faithful. More popular, though not less accurate in form and substance, is the translation published by Bishop Gilbert Burnet, in 1684; "revised, corrected, and improved" by Thomas Williamson, in 1751, and by A Gentleman of Oxford, in 1753.‡ The only other translation of importance

* Or Budæus, "the restorer," says Mackintosh, "of Greek learning in France, and probably the most critical scholar in that province of literature on the north of the Alps."

† Reprinted, with copious notes and a biographical and critical introduction, by the Rev. T. F. Dibdin, F.S.A., in 1808. It will also be found included among Mr. Arber's excellent reprints of the English classics.

‡ Reprinted in the Phœnix Library, by J. M. Morgan, in 1850;

was that undertaken by Arthur Cayley, the younger, in 1808.

In the quotations which follow I shall adopt the version by Bishop Burnet; but it may give some idea of the first original translation by Ralph Robinson, in 1551, if I take a few sentences from his preliminary "Epistle to the right honourable, and his verie singuler good maister, maister William Cecylle esquiere, one of the twoo principal secretaries to the kyng his most excellent maiestie." "I toke upon me," he says, "to tourne, and translate oute of Latine into oure Englishe tonge the frutefull, and profitable boke, which Sir Thomas more knight compiled, and made of the new yle Utopia, conteining and setting forth ye best state, and fourme of a publique weale: A worke (as it appeareth) written almost fourtie yeres ago by the said sir Thomas More ye author thereof. The whiche man, forasmuche as he was a man of late tyme, yea almost of thies our dayes:* and for ye excellent qualities, wherewith the great goodness of God had plentyfully endowed him, and for ye high place, and rowme, wherunto his prince had most graciously called him, notably wel knowen, not only among us his countremen, but also in forrein countreis and nations: Therefore I have muche to speake of him. This only I saye: yat it is much to be lamented of al, and not only of us English men, yat a man of so incomparable

previously edited, with notes historical and explanatory, by F. Warner, LL.D., in 1798; and, again, with a preliminary discourse, by J. A. St. John, in 1858.

* It will be remembered that Robinson wrote in the reign of Edward VI., when the reformed doctrines were so prevalent, that he could accuse Sir Thomas of "stubbourne obstinacie" with perfect impunity.

witte, of so profounde knowlege, of so absolute learning, and of so fine eloquence was yet neverthelesse so much blinded, rather with obstinacie, then with ignoraunce yat he could not or rather would not see the shining light of goddes holy truthe in certein principal pointes of Christian religion: but did rather cheuse to persever, and continue in his wilfull and stubbourne obstinacie even to ye very death. This I say is a thing much to be lamented. But letting this matter pass, I retourne again to Utopia. Which (as I said befor) is a work not only for ye matter yat it conteineth fruteful and profitable, but also for ye writers eloquent latine stiele pleasaunt and delectable. Which he yat readeth in latine, as ye authour himself wrote it, perfectly understanding ye same: doubtles he shal take great pleasure, and delite both in ye sweete eloquence of the writer, and also in ye wittie invencion, and fine conveiaunce, or disposition of ye matter: but most of all in the good, and holsome lessons, which be there in great plenty, and aboundaunce."

There is nothing more remarkable throughout "Utopia" than the skill with which More, whilst advancing some of the most startling theories, many of them in their very nature unpalatable to those by whom he was most highly honoured, manages to steer clear of any actual offence, and even to disarm all indignation, by the skilful appropriation of his flattery. He is careful, for instance, to open with a panegyric on the king whose favourite he had been, and was, but whose mode of government is frequently satirised in the succeeding pages. "Henry the Eighth," he says, "the unconquered king of England, a prince adorned

with all the virtues that become a great monarch; having some differences of no small consequence with Charles, the most serene Prince of Castile, sent me into Flanders, as his ambassador, for treating and composing matters between them." Then follow those particulars of his embassy which have been already given, till he comes to relate how one day, as he was returning home from mass at St. Mary's, "which is the chief church, and the most frequented of any in Antwerp," he saw his friend Ægidius "talking with a stranger that seemed past the flower of his age; his face was tanned, he had a long beard, and his cloak was hanging carelessly about him, so that by his looks and habit I concluded he was a seaman. As soon as Pèter saw me he came and saluted me; and, as I was returning his civility, he took me aside, and, pointing to him with whom he had been discoursing, he said, 'Do you see that man? I was just thinking to bring him to you.' I answered, 'He should have been very welcome on your account.' 'And on his own, too,' replied he, 'if you knew the man; for there is none alive that can give you so copious an account of unknown nations and countries as he can do, which I know you very much desire.' 'Then,' said I, 'I did not guess amiss, for at first sight I took him for a sailor.' 'But you are much mistaken,' said he, 'for he has not sailed as a seaman but as a traveller, or rather as a philosopher; for this Raphael, who from his family carries the name of Hythloday* . . . . is a Portuguese by birth, and was so desirous of seeing the world, that he divided his estate among his brothers,

* From the Greek ὕθλος and δάϊος, meaning "knowing in trifles."

and ran fortunes with Americus Vespucius, and bore a share in three of his four voyages that are now published,* only he did not remain with him in his last, but obtained leave from him, almost by force, that he might be one of those four-and-twenty who were left at the farthest place at which they touched in their last voyage to New Castile. The leaving him thus did not a little gratify one that was more fond of travelling than of returning home to be buried in his own country; for he used often to say that the way to heaven was the same from all places;† and he that had no grave had all the heavens still over him. Yet this disposition of mind had cost him dear if God had not been very gracious to him; for after he, with five Castilians, had travelled over many countries, at last, by a strange good fortune, he got to Ceylon, and from thence to Calicut, and there he very happily found some Portuguese ships; and so, beyond all men's expectations, he came back to his own country.' When Peter had said this to me I thanked him for his kindness, in intending to give me the acquaintance of a man whose conversation he knew would be so acceptable

* More here refers to the collection of voyages published by Deodati in 1507, under the title of "Quatuor Americi Vesputii Navagationes." "Near the end of this tract," says Mr. Arber, "is the following account of what occurred on 3 April, 1504:— 'Relictus igitur in castedo praefato Christicolis xxiiij et cum illis xij machinis ac aliis plurimus armis una cum prouisione pro sexe mensibus sufficiente.' On this passage More hangs his whole fiction. This is the carefully concealed starting-point of the imaginary portion of the work. Thence the Portuguese Hythlodaye wanders to the island of 'Nowhere,' which, to More's mind, was 'beyond the line equinoctial' between Brazil and India."

† A saying of Anaxagoras, which reappears in Cicero ("Tusc. Quaes.," i. 43) and Erasmus ("Apop.," vii. 561). See Longfellow's ballad of "Sir Humphrey Gilbert."

to me; and upon that Raphael and I embraced one another; and, after those civilities were past which are ordinary for strangers upon their first meeting, we went all to my house and, entering into the garden, sat down upon a green bank, and entertained one another in discourse."

The discourse was not, apparently, of the liveliest and most exhilarating kind. The first book of the "Utopia," so far from being concerned with a description of the perfect commonwealth, is devoted to a serious conversation between Giles, More, and Hythloday, in which some hard blows are dealt at the condition of England in the time of Henry VIII.* Every page may be said to contain some political allusion, but the allusion is made in such skilfully inoffensive terms that it would have been impossible to resent it seriously. Hythloday is asked why he does not enter into some king's service, for they are sure there are none to whom he would not be acceptable. To which he replies that "most princes apply themselves more to warlike matters than to the useful arts of peace," and in these he neither has any knowledge, nor does he much desire it. "They are generally more set on acquiring new kingdoms than on governing those well that they have; and among the ministers of princes, there are none that either are not so wise as not to need any assistance, or at least that do not think themselves so wise that

* "These," says Hallam, "are remarkable in a courtier; but, in the first years of Nero, the voice of Seneca was heard without resentment. Nor had Henry much to take to himself in the reprehension of parsimonious accumulation of wealth, which was meant for his father's course of government."

they imagine they need none; and if they do court any, it is only those for whom the prince has much personal favour, whom by their fawnings and flatteries they endeavour to fix to their own interests." Here the reference is obviously to "the supreme counsels of Wolsey," who abetted the war policy of the king, and did little to secure the peace and well-being of the people. It is then inquired if Hythloday has ever been in England? He had, and "was then much obliged," he says, "to that reverend prelate," John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was More's earliest patron, and whom he here repays with sentences of the highest eulogy. "One day," says Hythloday, "when I was dining with him, there happened to be at table one of the English lawyers, who took occasion to run out in a high commendation of the severe execution of justice upon thieves, who, he said, were then hanged so fast, that there were sometimes twenty on a gibbet; and upon that, he said, he could not wonder enough how it came to pass, that since so few escaped, there were yet so many thieves left who were still robbing in all places. Upon this I . . . said there was no reason to wonder at the matter, since this way of punishing thieves was neither just in itself, nor good for the public; for as the severity was too great, so the remedy was not effectual; simple theft not being so great a crime that it ought to cost a man his life; and no punishment how severe soever being able to restrain those from robbing who can find out no other way of livelihood. . . . There is a great number of noblemen among you," says More,

still speaking in the person of Hythloday, "that live not only idle themselves as drones, subsisting by other men's labours, who are their tenants, and whom they pare to the quick, and thereby raise their revenues . . . but, besides this, they carry about with them a large number of idle fellows, who never learned any art by which they may gain their living; and these, as soon as either their lord dies, or they themselves fall sick, are turned out of doors; for your lords are readier to feed idle people than to take care of the sick. . . . Now when the stomachs of those that are thus turned out of doors grow keen, they rob no less keenly; and what else can they do? . . . But this bad custom of keeping many servants, that is so common among you, is not peculiar to this nation. In France there is yet a more pestiferous sort of people, for the whole country is full of soldiers, that are still kept up in time of peace; and these are kept in pay upon the same account that you plead for those idle retainers about noblemen: this being a maxim of those pretended statesmen, that it is necessary for the public safety, to have a good body of veteran soldiers ever in readiness." It seemed, to Hythloday, "very unreasonable, that for the prospect of war, which you need never have but when you please, you should maintain so many idle men, as will always disturb you in time of peace, which is ever to be more considered than war." But he did not think that this necessity of stealing arose only from these causes. There was another cause of it that was more peculiar to England: he meant, he says,

"the increase of pasture, by which your sheep, that are naturally mild, and easily kept in order, may be said now to devour men, and unpeople, not only villages, but towns: for wherever it is found that the sheep of any soil yield a softer and richer wool than ordinary, there the nobility and gentry, and even those holy men the abbots, not contented with the old rents which these farms yielded, nor thinking it good enough that they, living at their ease, do no good to the public, resolve to do it hurt instead of good. They stop the course of agriculture, inclose grounds, and destroy houses and towns, reserving only the churches, that they may lodge their sheep in them." Hence a number of "miserable people, both men and women, married, unmarried, old and young, with their poor but numerous families (since country business requires many hands), are all forced to change their seats, not knowing whither to go, and they must sell for almost nothing their household stuff, which could not bring them much money, even though they might stay for a buyer. When that little money is at an end, for it will be soon spent, what is left for them to do, but either to steal and to be hanged (God knows how justly), or to go about and beg? . . . Give order," says Hythloday, "that these who have dispeopled so much soil, may either rebuild the villages that they have pulled down, or let out their grounds to such as will do it; restrain those engrossings of the rich that are as bad almost as monopolies; leave fewer occasions to idleness; let agriculture be set up again, and the manufacture of wool be regu-

lated, that so there may be work found for these companies of idle people, whom want forces to be thieves, or who now being idle vagabonds, or useless servants, will certainly grow thieves at last. If you do not find a remedy to these evils, it is a vain thing to boast of your severity of punishing theft; which though it may have the appearance of justice, yet in itself it is neither just nor convenient; for if you suffer your people to be ill-educated, and their manners to be corrupted from their infancy, and then punish them for those crimes to which their first education disposed them, what else is to be concluded from this, but that you first make thieves and then punish them?"

Such is the kind of conversation, on matters which have as much interest for us nowadays as they had for Englishmen in the time of More, with which the first book of the "Utopia" is occupied. Towards the end of that book Hythloday assures his hearers that if they had been at Utopia with him, and had seen their laws and rules as he did, for the space of five years, in which he had lived among them, and during which time he was so delighted with them that he would never have left them, if it had not been to make the discovery of that new world to the Europeans—they would then confess that they had never seen a people so well constituted as the Utopians. "Upon this," says More, "I said to him, 'I do earnestly beg of you, that you would describe that island very particularly to us. Be not too short in it, but set out in order all things relating to their soils, their

rivers, their towns, their people, their manners, constitution, laws, and, in a word, all that you imagine we desire to know; and you may well imagine that we desire to know everything concerning them of which we are hitherto ignorant.' 'I will do it very willingly,' said he, 'for I have digested the whole matter carefully, but it will take up some time.' 'Let us go then,' said I, 'first and dine, and then we shall have leisure enough.' 'Be it so,' said he. So we went in and dined, and after dinner we came back and sat down in the same place. I ordered my servants to take care that none might come and interrupt us, and both Peter and I desired Raphael to be as good as his word. So when he saw that we were very intent upon it, he paused a little to recollect himself, and began in this manner."

It will not, of course, be expected that, in the short space at my disposal, I shall give a complete analysis of the second book of the "Utopia;" but I may indicate some of the leading characteristics of More's Republic, and refer to some of those passages which seem to throw most light upon his times and ours. I have already said that the perfect commonwealth was placed by its creator on an island; and it should now be explained that, originally, it was called Abraxa, but obtained the name of Utopia (οὐ, no, τόπος, place; or Nusquama, nowhere) from that of its conqueror, who was named Utopus. It was two hundred miles broad, and its figure not unlike a crescent in shape, the sea coming in between its horns, eleven miles broad, and forming a great bay,

environed with land to the compass of about five hundred miles, and well secured from winds. The entrance to this bay could only be attempted by those familiar with the channel, and the coast was otherwise so fortified, both by nature and art, that a small number of men could hinder the descent of a great army. There were forty-four cities in the island, all large and well-built, and all formed and governed upon one uniform plan. Each had twenty miles of soil round it and assigned to it, and each sent up three of its wisest senators once a year to the chief city, Amaurot (from ἀμαυρός, shadowy, unknown), for consulting for their common concerns. The country outside the towns was devoted to agriculture, and was covered with farm-houses for the husbandmen, which were well contrived and furnished with all things necessary for rural labour. Each country family consisted of no fewer than forty men and women and two slaves, a master and mistress presiding over every family, and every thirty families being governed by a special magistrate. After staying two years in the country, twenty out of each family were sent back to town, and their places were taken by twenty townspeople, who came to learn the agricultural arts, which by-and-by they would have to teach to others. Everything that the country-people wished was furnished to them by the dwellers in the towns. When the time of harvest came, the magistrates in the country sent to those in the towns, and let them know how many hands they needed for reaping the harvest; and the number they called for being sent to them, they commonly dispatched it, we are told, all in one day. Amaurot, the chief city of the island,

was evidently intended as a type of London, just as the Anider, described as rising eighty miles above it; but growing larger and larger till, after sixty miles' course below it, it was buried in the ocean, is intended for the river Thames. Its name is from the Greek ἄνυδρος, and therefore, curiously enough, means "waterless." The city itself was compassed by a high and thick wall, in which there were many towers and forts, and the streets were made very convenient for all carriages, and were well sheltered from the winds. The buildings were good, and were so uniform that a whole side of a street looked like one house. The inhabitants were lucky in possessing, each of them, a large garden in connection with their dwellings, and their doors were so happily constructed that they not only easily opened, but actually shut of their own accord! There was, however, no property among the Utopians; every man entered freely into any house whatsoever; and at every ten years' end they shifted their houses by lot.

It will be observed, indeed, in the perusal of this famous fiction, that the conception, at one time so happy and so desirable, is at others quite the reverse; and the discrepancy may probably be accounted for by the fact that the author was anxious not to appear too decisively in the character of a reformer, and introduced into his work, in *malice prepense*, much of which he conscientiously disapproved. It is not difficult, however, to ascertain where he is serious or is not serious. It is certain, for instance, that in his description of the mode of government which obtained in Utopia, Sir Thomas was speaking his own mind, and was really aiming at reforms which it has been

reserved to our own day to accomplish. Thus, after stating that every thirty families choose, every year, a magistrate, called the syphogrant, and that the syphogrants, to the number of two hundred, have the choice of the prince or governor out of a list of four, whom the people of the four divisions of the city name to them, he says, "They take an oath before they proceed to an election that they will choose him whom they think meetest for the office;" and "they give their voices secretly, so that it is not known for whom everybody gives his suffrage." In this the best critics have, very rightly, I think, seen a distinct suggestion of the vote by ballot. But, more than that, it was enacted that the prince should hold office for life, and he could be removed if he were suspected of cherishing designs against the popular liberty. The trainbors, or representatives of every ten syphogrants, met every third day, and oftener if need was, and consulted with the prince, either concerning the affairs of the state in general, or such private differences as might arise sometimes among the people. There were always two syphogrants called into the council-chamber, and these were changed every day. It was a fundamental rule in their government that no conclusion could be made in anything that related to the public till it had been first debated three days in the council. It was death for any to meet and consult concerning the state, unless it were either in their ordinary council or in the assembly of the whole body of the people. These things, we are told, were so provided among them, that the prince and the trainbors might not conspire to change the government and enslave the people;

and, therefore, when anything of great importance was set on foot, it was sent to the syphogrants, who, after they had communicated it to the families that belonged to their divisions, and had considered it among themselves, made report to the senate; and, upon great occasions, the matter was referred to the council of the whole nation. Here, it will be observed, was every provision made for obtaining the consent of the people before any legislative act could become the law of the land; and, for even greater safety, "one rule observed in their council was, never to debate a thing on the same day in which it was first proposed; for that is always referred to the next meeting, that so men might not rashly, and in the heat of discourse, engage themselves too soon, which might bias them so much that, instead of considering the good of the public, they would rather study to maintain their own notions; and, by a perverse and preposterous sort of shame, hazard their country, rather than endanger their own reputation, or venture the being suspected to have wanted foresight in the expedients that they proposed at first."

We now come to the description of their trades and manner of life, and we learn that all over the island they wore the same sort of clothes, without any other distinction than was necessary for marking the difference between the sexes, and between the married and unmarried. The fashion never altered, and every family made their own clothes. All among them, women as well as men, learned some trade or other. Generally the same trade passed down from father to son, inclination often following descent; but if any man's genius lay another way, he was by adoption translated into a

family that dealt in the trade to which he was inclined. They were careful, these Utopians, not to wear themselves out with perpetual toil from morning to night, as if they were beasts of burden. Dividing the day and night into twenty-four hours, they appointed six of these for work, three of which were before dinner; after that they dined, and interrupted their labours for two hours, and then they went to work again for three more hours, and after that they supped, and at eight o'clock, counting from noon, they went to bed and slept eight hours; and for their other hours, besides those of work, and those that went for eating and sleeping, they were left to every man's discretion; yet they were not to abuse that interval to luxury and idleness, but must employ it in some proper exercise, according to their various inclinations, which was, for the most part, reading. It was customary to have public lectures before daybreak, to which none were obliged to go but those that were marked out for literature. After supper they spent an hour in some diversion, in summer in their gardens, and in winter in the halls where they eat. "They did not so much as know dice, or such like foolish and mischievous games." But they had "two sorts of games not unlike our chess; the one," says Hythloday, "is between several numbers, by which one number, as it were, consumes another; the other resembles a battle between the vices and the virtues, in which the enmity in the vices among themselves, and their agreement against virtue, is not unpleasantly represented, together with the special oppositions between the particular virtues and vices; as also the methods by which vice does either

openly assault or secretly undermine virtue, and virtue, on the other hand, resists it, and the means by which either side obtains the victory." If anything was discouraged in Utopia it was idleness. Even the syphogrants themselves, though the law excused them, yet did not excuse themselves, that so by their examples they might excite the industry of the rest of the people. The like exemption was allowed to those who, being recommended to the people by the priests, were, by the secret suffrages of the syphogrants, privileged from labour, that they might apply themselves wholly to study; and if any of these fell short of those hopes that he seemed to give at first, he was obliged to go to work. Sometimes a mechanic would so employ his leisure hours that he made a considerable advance in learning; whereupon he was exempted from being a tradesman, and ranked among the learned men, out of whom they chose their ambassadors, their priests, their trainbors, and the prince himself.

But to return, as Hythloday remarks, to the manner of their living together. Wives, it seems, were not infected by the desire for "women's rights," which is so popular a portion of the modern programme. They served their husbands, and the children served their parents, and the younger children served the elder children. Those that were under five years of age sat among the nurses; the remainder of "the younger sort" of both sexes, till they were fit for marriage, either served those that sat at table, or, if they were not strong enough for that, stood by them "in great silence," and eat that which was given them by those that sat at table. The old men, we are in-

formed, were honoured with a particular respect. And why? Probably because, though they took occasion to entertain those about them with some useful and pleasant enlargements, they did not engross the whole discourse so to themselves that the younger people might not put in a share; on the contrary, they engaged them in conversation, that so they might find out the force of every one's spirit and observe their temper.

I pass over the description of Utopian modes of travelling, as they do not present any points of interest to the modern reader. We may note, however, that the Utopians possessed common halls, like those of Crete and Sparta, and that in every town there were four hospitals for the sick and wounded, which strongly resemble the lazarettos of these later days. The Utopians seem to have had a great contempt for wealth, gold being among them what Ralph Robinson calls "the reprochful badge of infamed persons." They wondered how any man could be so much taken with the glaring, doubtful lustre of a jewel or stone, that could look up at a star or at the sun itself. Equally unable were they to comprehend how any should value himself because his cloth was made of a finer thread than any other's; "for, how fine soever that thread may be, it was once no better than the fleece of a sheep, and that sheep was a sheep still, for all its wearing it." They often asked Hythloday what sort of pleasure men could find in throwing the dice; and what sort of pleasure they could find in hearing the barking and howling of dogs, which seemed to them rather odious than pleasant sounds. Nor could they understand the

gratification of seeing dogs running after a hare, any more than of seeing one dog run after another. Among the Utopians, says Hythloday, all this business of hunting was turned over to their butchers; but then Sir Thomas More did not live in the nineteenth century, and had never heard of a tournament of doves! He describes his perfect people as regarding the pleasures that lie in the mind as the greatest pleasures, "and the chief of these are those which arise out of true virtue and the witness of a good conscience." "They say, that the first dictate of reason is, the kindling in us a love and reverence for the Divine Majesty, to whom we owe both all that we have and all that we can ever hope for. In the next place, reason directs us to keep our minds as free from passion and as cheerful as we can, and that we should consider ourselves as bound by the ties of good nature and humanity, to use our utmost endeavours to help forward the happiness of all other persons." Yet they did not think it wrong to employ their fellow-creatures as slaves,* probably because even Sir Thomas More, enlightened as he was, could not imagine in his wildest dreams the magnificent work accomplished, not so very long ago, by Clarkson and his philanthropic helpers. In other things they were more happy. They took great pleasure in fools, and it was thought a base and un-

* "If," says Hallam, "false and impracticable theories are found in the 'Utopia'" (and perhaps he knew them to be such), "this is in a much greater degree true of the Platonic Republic; and they are more than compensated by the sense of justice and humanity that pervades it, and his bold censures on the vices of power. . . . It is possible that some passages which are neither philosophical nor compatible with just principles of morals, were thrown out as mere paradoxes of a playful mind."

becoming thing to use them ill. It was thought a sign of a sluggish and sordid mind not to preserve carefully one's natural beauty; but it was likewise an infamous thing to use paint or fard. They all saw that no beauty recommends a wife so much to her husband as the probity of her life and her obedience; for as some few are caught and held only by beauty, so all people are held by the other excellences which charm all the world. They all lived easily together; for none of the magistrates were either insolent or cruel to the people, but they affected rather to be called fathers, and, by being really so, they well deserved that name. There were but few laws in Utopia, the constitution of its people being such that they did not need many; and hence they had no lawyers among them, for, says Sir Thomas More, who was himself a great and a successful lawyer, they considered them as a sort of people whose profession it was to disguise matters as well as to wrest laws.

It will be seen, from the passages which I have already quoted, and in which I have followed as far as possible the quaint but forcible diction of old Bishop Burnet, that the "Utopia" not only throws an interesting and a valuable light upon his own time and ours, but that it contains many things which are of the highest importance to mankind in every age and clime. Most remarkable of all, perhaps, is that noble section in which he treats of the religion of the Utopians, and in which he strangely contradicts the teaching and actions of his after life. "There were," he tells us, "several sorts of religions, not only in different parts of the island, but even in every town. . . .

Every man might be of any religion he pleased, and might endeavour to draw others to it by the force of argument, or by amicable and modest ways, but without bitterness against those of other opinions, but that he ought to use no other force but that of persuasion, and was neither to mix reproaches nor violence with it; and such as did otherwise were to be condemned to banishment or slavery. This law was made by Utopus, not only for preserving the public peace, which he saw suffered much by daily contentions and irreconcilable heats in these matters, but because he thought the interest of religion itself required it. He judged it was not fit to determine anything rashly in that matter, and seemed to doubt whether those different forms of religion might not all come from God, who might inspire men differently, He being possibly pleased with every variety of it; and so he thought it was a very indecent thing for any man to frighten and threaten other men to believe anything because it seemed true to him; and in case that one religion was certainly true, and all the rest false, he reckoned that the native force of truth would break forth at last, and shine bright, if it were managed only by the strength of argument and with a winning gentleness." I confess I cannot help thinking that Sir Thomas More was always more liberally inclined than he found it prudent to avow, and that the friend of Erasmus could not, in his heart of hearts, have approved of the unhappy policy of persecution.

What I have now to remark is the skilful manner in which the fictitious character of the Utopian commonwealth is kept out of sight. It has been observed

with what circumstantial minuteness, reminding us of Defoe and Swift, More describes his meeting with the Portuguese; and in his letter to Ægidius, prefixed to the first edition, he is careful to keep up the illusion in the most ingenious way. "My servant, John Clement, has started some things which shake me; you know he was present with us, as I think he ought to be at every conversation that may be of use to him. . . . As far as my memory serves me, the bridge over Anider at Amaurot, was five hundred paces broad, according to Raphael's account; but John assures me he spoke only of three hundred paces; therefore I pray you recollect what you can remember of this, for if you agree with him, I will believe that I have been mistaken. . . . I have another difficulty which presses me more, and makes your writing to Raphael necessary; for as we did not think of asking it, so neither did he of telling us, in what part of the new-found world Utopia is situated; this was such an omission that I would gladly redeem it at any rate: I am ashamed, that after I have told so many things concerning this island, I cannot let my readers know in what sea it lies. There are some among us"—and strange as the statement seems, it is, we are told, literally true—"that have a mighty desire to go thither, and, in particular, one pious divine is very earnest on it, not so much out of a vain curiosity of seeing unknown countries, as that he may advance our religion, which is so happily begun to be planted there; and that he may do this regularly, he intends to procure a mission from the Pope, and to be sent there as their Bishop." In corroboration of this

curious fact, Sir Thomas's great-grandson tells us that "many great learned men, as Budæus and Johannes Paludanus, upon a fervent zeal, wished that some excellent divines might be sent thither to preach Christ's Gospel; yea, there were here amongst us at home sundry good men and learned divines very anxious to take the voyage, to bring the people to the faith of Christ, whose manners they did so well like." *

When once the example had been set by More, it was to be expected that it would be speedily followed, and it was not long before our literature received a new addition to the catalogue of perfect commonwealths in the "New Atlantis" of the great Lord Bacon. "This fable my lord devised," says W. Rawley,† "to the end that he might exhibit therein a model or description of a college, instituted for the interpreting of nature, and the producing of great and marvellous works for the benefit of men, under the name of Solomon's House, or The College of the Six Days Works. And even so far his lordship hath proceeded to finish that part. . . . His lordship thought also in this present fable to compose a frame of laws, or of the best state or mould of a commonwealth; but foreseeing it would be a long work, his desire of collecting the natural history diverted him, which he preferred many degrees before it." It is more likely, as Mr. St. John suggests, that Bacon stopped where he did from a fear, which does not seem to have been altogether absent from the mind of More, that he might come to be regarded as a political inno-

* A very similar incident is recorded in connection with Swift's "Travels of Lemuel Gulliver.

† In the "Address to the Reader" which precedes the work.

vator, at a time when political innovation was attended with considerable difficulty and danger. The "Oceana" of Harrington appeared in 1656, and, though it strenuously advocated the most approved republican principles, "met with many difficulties in the publishing;" probably because, in one or two passages, it was thought to reflect somewhat severely upon Cromwell's policy.* In our own more liberal and prosperous days we have witnessed, with curiosity and interest, but without apprehension, the efforts made by Lord Lytton in his "Coming Race," and Mr. Samuel Butler in his "Erewhon," to follow in the footsteps of the imaginative philosophers; and there is no sign that the number of wayfarers in that direction is likely to be fewer in the future than in the past.

It must not be forgotten, in the meantime, that the composition of the "Utopia" is not the only claim of Sir Thomas More upon the remembrance of posterity. He was not only the first writer of prose in English which can be perfectly understood by Englishmen in the present day, but he was our earliest historian, and

* The reader may profitably turn, too, to Bishop Hall's "Mundus Alter et Idem, sive Terra Australis ante hæc Semper Incognita Authore Mercurio Britannico" (published in 1643), in which, says Professor Masson, "with more, perhaps, of Rabelaisian satire than of political allegory in the design, we have verbal descriptions, and even maps, of the countries of Crapulia or Feeding Land, Viraginia or Virago Land, and other such regions." Another work of a somewhat similar character was Barclay's Latin allegorical romance, "Argenis" (published in 1621), in which the island of Sicily stands for France, and the recent civil wars of that country and its foreign relations during them are philosophically represented—Henry IV. figuring as Poliarchus, Calvin as Usinulea, the Huguenots as Hyperaphanii, and so on. Coleridge thought so highly of this work that he expressed a wish that it could have made its exit from its Latin form and have been moulded into an English poem in the octave stanza or blank verse.

his "Historie of the pittiful Life and unfortunate Death of King Edward V. and the Duke of York, his Brother; with the Troublesome and Tyrannical Government of the Usurpation of Richard III. and his Miserable end," the materials of which were probably supplied by Archbishop Morton, "commands belief by simplicity and by abstinence from too confident affirmation. It betrays," says Sir James Mackintosh, "some negligence about minute particulars, which is not displeasing as a symptom of the absence of eagerness to enforce a narrative. The composition has an ease and a rotundity, which gratify the ear without awakening the suspicion of art, of which there was no model in any preceding writer of English prose." The Latin epigrams of More, a small volume which took two years to pass through the press at Basle, and finally appeared in 1520, are mostly translations from the "Anthologia," and were rather made known to Europe, says the same critic, by the fame of the writer, than calculated to increase it. "They contain, however, some decisive proofs that he always entertained the opinions respecting the dependence of all government on the consent of the people, to which he professed his adherence almost in his dying moments." * Their Latinity is of the same school as that of Erasmus. Of his writings against the Lutherans, of which I give a list below,† and which were as

* "Life of Sir Thomas More," 1844, p. 47.

† (1) "A Dyaloge of Syr Thomas More Knyghte: wherein he treatyd divers Matters, as of the Veneration and Worshyp of Ymagys & Relyques, prayyng to Sayntys, and goyng on Pylgrymage, wyth many otHere thyngys touchyng the pestylent sect of Luther and Tyndale, by the tone begone in Saxony, and by the tother laboryd to be brought into England." (1529.) (2) "The Supplycacyon of

famous as "Utopia" in their time, it is noticeable that "they were probably those of his works on which he exerted the most acuteness and employed the most knowledge. They contain many anecdotes which throw considerable light on our ecclesiastical history during the first persecutions of the Protestants, or, as they were then called, the Lutherans, under the old statutes against Lollards, in the period which extended from 1520 to 1532; and they do not seem to have been enough examined with that view by the historians of the Church."

On the whole, there is no more distinguished name than that of Sir Thomas More on the bead-roll of our literary heroes between Chaucer and Spenser.

Soulys against The Supplycacyon of Beggars" [in reply to a short invective by Simon Fyshe]. (1529.) (3) "The Confutacyon of Tyndales Answere" [to his "Dialogue"]. (1532.) A "Second Parte" of this "Confutacyon" appeared in 1533, in which year More also published (4) "A Letter impugnynge the erronyouse wrytyng of John Fryth, against the blessed Sacrament of the Aultare," and (5) "The Answere to the first Part of the poysoned Booke whyche a nameless Heretike" [John Frith] "hath named the Supper of the Lord."

FOX'S BOOK OF MARTYRS.

In the interval between the composition and the publication of the "Utopia"—that is, in 1517—there was born at Boston, in Lincolnshire, a man who affords on many points the most effective and peculiar contrast to Sir Thomas More. The latter, if I understand him rightly, was a Churchman with a tendency towards liberalism, which he generally found it prudent to suppress; a man who, by disposition and by culture, was inclined more towards the moderation of Erasmus than to the fire-breathing enthusiasm of Luther or Calvin. Fox, on the other hand, was, as most people are aware, a fervid Protestant; and all the more fervid in his Protestantism, doubtless, from the fact that he was a convert from those who believed in the supremacy of the Pope, and that his earliest years had been passed in the society and under the instruction of those who regarded the new opinions with the greatest horror.

His father was a private gentleman of good birth but slender fortune, who died a few years after Fox's appearance in the world, leaving his wife free to embrace a second offer of marriage from a suitor who seems to have occupied a very similar position, as

regards worldly matters, to his predecessor. At any rate, he was able to send his step-son to the University of Oxford, where, at the age of sixteen, he was entered at Brasenose College, and placed under the tutorship of a Mr. John Hawarden, one of the fellows.* It was here that, by a concurrence of events which one would hesitate to call by the name of chance, he came to share his college apartment with another student, called Alexander Nowell, who afterwards became a celebrated preacher and Dean of St. Paul's.† Nowell happened to be the elder, though not the abler, of the two, and there can be no doubt that he exercised considerable influence upon the mind and character of his young companion. At the age of twenty, and two years before Fox came up to reside at Oxford, Nowell had been appointed public reader of logic to the University, and was highly esteemed as a scholar of distinguished industry and ability. He seems to have been one of the first to imbibe the opinions of Luther, who had published his theses against the Roman Church in the very year of Fox's birth; and it was probably owing to his conversation and example that Fox began to doubt whether the present state of things was altogether what it should be.

"At this period," says one of his biographers, "there was just enough in the posture of public affairs to encourage two such minds in their investigation of ecclesiastical evils, and at the same time to convince them that such investigations alone might expose them to the greatest danger; that one new

* Wood, "Athenæ Oxonienses," i. 529.
† Churton, "Life of Nowell," p. 6.

impulse acting upon the fickle mind of an arbitrary monarch might spoil all their hopes, transfer them for the remainder of a short life from a college to a prison, exile them from their native country, or bring upon them a violent and barbarous death. How far these considerations stimulated their zeal and tempered it with due discretion, we have no means of accurately judging; but that their critical circumstances, which must have suggested some such reasoning, neither abated their Protestant energy nor deprived them of Christian prudence and caution, we have enough in their history to convince us." It is clear, however, that their disaffection was suspected by the authorities of their particular college, for when, after taking his bachelor's degree in 1538 and his master's degree in 1543, Fox was elected fellow of Magdalen College, it was not without some premonitory murmuring; whilst Nowell was glad to have the opportunity of leaving Oxford to become second master of Westminster School, "where," it is said, "he instructed his pupils in the ancient principles of the Catholic faith, as they were cleared from the papal errors which had so long blended with and disfigured them."

Fox's change of opinion was not without some immediate benefit to him, if, as it is recorded, it led him to make himself master of all the controversies which had agitated the Christian world, and to perfect his acquaintance with the history of that Church whose persecutions, suffered and inflicted, he was destined to celebrate by-and-by in his immortal book. We are told that before he was thirty he had read all the Greek and Latin fathers, together with all the decrees

of consistories, convocations, and councils; and though he was never at any time a famous Hebrew scholar, still, his knowledge of the intricacies of that language was unusual among the learned of that day.* To remarkable industry he united a no less remarkable openness of mind, which enabled him to detect the ingenious sophistry of the papistical divines, and quickly determined his judgment in the direction of the Protestant standpoint. It was not long, we are assured, before he came to the conclusion, "which nothing could shake, that some great effort must soon be made, and had in fact already commenced, to reform the Church of Christ, especially in his own beloved and deluded country, in which the heresy and tyranny of the Romish faith had acquired a long and almost inveterate entrenchment. There can be no doubt that his conscience and character became proportionably conformed to the will of Christ—that he grew as a Christian in the grace of the gospel with the same rapidity, enlargement, and strength, as he increased in an acquaintance with its history and truth, and in zeal for its most extensive diffusion. So ardent," it is related, "was his pursuit of personal godliness, that he would spend whole nights in sacred studies and spiritual devotion; reading the Scriptures in their original tongues, beseeching in humble prayer to God the spirit of wisdom and knowledge rightly to understand them, and comparing spiritual things with spiritual, that he might comprehend the whole truth as it is in Jesus Christ." It is even said—though the relation has a touch of the apocryphal about it—that "he

* Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses," i. 529.

would often leave his study or his bed at midnight, and resort to a neighbouring grove, to meditate on what he had been reading, and pour forth the desires of his soul in earnest supplication and grateful thanksgivings. On these occasions his fellow-students would sometimes watch and listen to him, and several were deeply impressed by what they overheard in favour of a more earnest pursuit of Christian truth and duty."

It could not be expected, however, that such unusual enthusiasm would be received with favour by the college authorities, who regarded Fox as an abettor of the new faith, and caused him to be overlooked and restrained in many of his favourite pursuits. It was observed that he gradually withdrew from attendance, except on necessary and official occasions, at the college chapel; and at last he was openly charged with heresy, brought before the heads of his college, ordered to leave the town and county without delay, and informed that he had cause to be thankful for so lenient and merciful a sentence.*

From this time almost to his death, the career of Fox was marked by a series of misfortunes which probably assisted him in sympathizing with the sufferings of those martyrs whose trials he was so soon to put on record, and whose example, so far as it taught him patience in tribulation, he faithfully followed to his dying day. His first act, now that he was publicly branded as a heretic and an outlaw, and thus cut off from the enjoyment of his academic emoluments, was to apply for the assistance of his friends; but, though he found many to support him in his secret discontent

* "Biographia Britannica," iii. 2020.

with the established religion and its officers, he could find none willing to defend him in his open hostility to the papal rule. Even his mother and his father-in-law turned against him, and he wandered here and there in search of some honest employment by which to gain his bread, until at last he was brought by Providence under the notice of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote,* near Stratford-on-Avon, whose name has been rendered famous by its connection with the story of our greatest poet, and from whom he obtained the post of tutor to his sons. In this position he remained for an unknown, though certainly a very short period, in the course of which he married the daughter of a citizen of Coventry, and at the end of which, probably owing to the strict search then being made for outlawed heretics, he was compelled to seek safety, first, with his wife's father, and afterwards with his mother and father-in-law, by whom he was received at Boston for a month or two. After that, he disappears altogether from our ken, until we learn that, within a few months of the king's death, when the influence of the queen and Cranmer permitted the reformers to appear more openly, he was found in London, frequenting, in company with other persons unfortunately out of work, the precincts of St. Paul's Cathedral. His son relates that, as he was one day sitting in that building, "spent with long fasting, his countenance thin, and eyes hollow, after the ghastly manner of dying men, every one shunning a spectacle of so much horror, there came to him one whom he never remembered to have seen before, who, sitting

* Wood, "Athenæ Oxonienses," i. 529.

down by him, and saluting him with much familiarity, thrust an untold sum of money into his hand, bidding him be of good cheer, adding withal, that he knew not how great the misfortunes were which oppressed him, but supposed it was no light calamity; that he should, therefore, accept in good part that small gift from his countryman which common courtesy had forced him to offer; that he should go and take care of himself, and take all occasions to prolong his life; adding, that within a few days new hopes were at hand, and a more certain condition of livelihood." The mysterious benefactor, whose identity was never afterwards discovered, was perfectly correct in his prognostication. "Within three days after the transaction, the presage was made good. Some one waited upon him from the Duchess of Richmond, who invited him, upon fair terms, into her service. It had so fallen out," explains the writer, "that, not long before, the Duke of Norfolk, the most renowned general of his time, together with his son, the Earl of Surrey, a man, as far as may be imagined, of sincere meaning and sharp understanding, were committed to custody in the Tower of London, for what crime is uncertain. While they were in prison, the earl's children were sent to the aforesaid duchess, their aunt, to be brought up and educated: Thomas, who succeeded to the dukedom; Henry, afterwards Earl of Northampton; and Jane, wife of Charles, the last Neville, Earl of Westmoreland, afterwards Countess of Westmoreland."

It seems difficult to account, at first sight, for the selection of the Duchess of Richmond as the guardian, and of Fox as the tutor, of the children of the im-

prisoned earl, when we remember that both were familiarly known to entertain the most advanced of Protestant principles. But the reasons seem to be that the duchess had earned the gratitude of the Government by acting as the chief witness against her unfortunate brother, and as the children were at the disposal of the authorities, it was doubtless thought more prudent to hand them over to a lady who was well-affected towards the ruling powers than commit them to the guardianship of their mother, who was an adherent of the papal faction. "Such," it has been remarked, "had been the rapid advance of the Reformation, that loyalty was likely henceforward to be identified with Protestantism. Henry was drawing towards his end, and had appointed his son Edward to set aside the claims of Mary; and the Earl of Hertford, into whose hands the regency was likely to fall, was known to be resolute in carrying on the Reformation." At Ryegate, therefore, where his pupils were located, Fox passed the next six or seven years of his eventful life—a period in which he witnessed the death of Henry VIII., the whole of the short reign of Edward VI., and the unhappy accession of "the Bloody Mary." The place was probably the most degraded and debased in superstition of all the parishes in the United Kingdom, and when Fox began to preach there, as he did, it is believed, immediately after the coronation of the youthful king, he found he had before him a vast field for the exercise of his labour. He discovered that idolatry was in full force among the inhabitants of the locality in which his lot was cast. "The fame of the Virgin had long fled from the town and its temple,

and her image, wherever it had aforetime been exhibited, had given way to that of an old fortune-teller and quack-doctress, reverently called by the besotted people of all ranks 'the old lady of Auldsworth.'" Against her, and against many other iniquities of the day, we may be sure that John Fox lifted up his eloquent testimony. He had been reinstated, it is said, by Edward, in his fellowship at Magdalen College, and some authorities say that he was ordained in 1550; but whether this date is or is not correct, and whether it refers to his ordination to the diaconate or the presbyterate, it seems impossible to say. This much is certain, that his ministerial work was performed without remuneration — his sole income being that which he derived from his tutorship of the Duke of Norfolk's grandchildren.

The Earl of Surrey was now dead, and the death of Henry had relieved the duke from any immediate fear of that decapitation to which he had been predestined. He was not, however, set perfectly at liberty till the accession of Queen Mary, who was anxious to make use of his military powers against the insurrection of Sir Thomas Wyatt. It was then that there began for Fox, as for all holders of reformed opinions, the bitter and persistent persecution for which the reign of this Queen is famous, or rather infamous, in the annals of England. Fox soon became aware that Stephen Gardiner, the bishop of the diocese in which he laboured, was a deadly enemy of the Protestant movement, and that he could not hope for safety whilst in Gardiner's power. He took refuge for a time in the protection of the new Duke of Norfolk, his old pupil, whose venerable grand-

father had at length succumbed before the excitement of his last campaign; but the hostile intentions of the bishop became so unpleasantly obvious that Fox was fain to take ship, with his wife, from Ipswich to Nieuport in Flanders. Thence he moved to Antwerp, which was then, as it had been in the time of More, one of the most flourishing of continental cities, and one which had the distinction of harbouring some of the most earnest and distinguished of the English reformers.

He did not stay there long, however. Despairing of finding any suitable occupation for his talents, he passed on to Strasburg, and from thence to Frankfort,* at one of which places his wife gave birth to her first child and only daughter, and from both of which they were driven successively by the high state of religious feeling. It was at Basle—the residence, like Antwerp, of so many of the adherents of the new opinions—that Fox took up his permanent abode;† and it was here, as we shall hereafter have to note, that he found leisure to proceed with the great work with which his name is associated, and the earlier portions of which he had published during his short stay at Strasburg. His chief employment, which he happily found sufficiently lucrative for the support of himself and his family, was in revising manuscripts and correcting the press for John Oporinus, whose famous printing-office was at that time "honoured by the services, while it gave permanence and publicity to the works, of some of the most enlightened and devout men that ever lived."

* Fuller's "Church History," book viii. 2, 41.
† *Ibid.*, book viii. 3, 10.

It is somewhat unfortunate, however, that at Basle Fox should have become acquainted with that band of Swiss and French reformers, whose views were of a more decided and advanced complexion than many of their brethren, and who proceeded much farther in the way of reducing and simplifying the services and government of the Church than the English Protestants. To these Fox was, unhappily for his own prosperity, induced to ally himself—thus interposing a barrier between himself and those less ardent spirits who, in rejecting the superstitions that had grown round the Church, were not disposed to deny the efficacy of her sacraments, or interrupt the regularity of her order. I am afraid it must be confessed that Fox went as far in the one direction as his persecutors had gone in the other. It is true that at Basle he had withheld from publication a Latin translation of Cranmer's answer to Gardiner on the Sacrament, because in that answer many questions were raised on which the Reformers were very much divided, and on which it was not prudent to divide them further. But Fox seems conscientiously to have adopted the extreme Puritan view, and, therefore, when the advent of Elizabeth to the throne in 1559 was hailed with joy by the more moderate minds as the dawn of a nobler and a brighter day, Fox, on the contrary, was in no hurry to leave his post at Basle, and did not return to England until the autumn. He then took up his abode at the city mansion of the Duke of Norfolk, in Aldgate, where he remained until the unfortunate attachment of the Duke for Mary Queen of Scots resulted in bringing that nobleman to the scaffold in 1572. After that, Fox settled in the

celebrated Grub Street, then, as in the days of Pope, the asylum of the more laborious but less affluent authors; and from that time till his death in 1587, he was occupied in literary work for John Day, the printer,* and in occasional preaching within the city of London, for which he obtained nothing in the shape of a regular and settled stipend. He was, indeed, presented by Cecil with a prebendaryship in Salisbury Cathedral, and he might have obtained considerable preferment,—for he was extremely popular amongst the London people,—but he refused to subscribe to anything but the Greek Testament, and, when reminded that he was already a dignitary of the Church, and therefore bound to acknowledge the authority of the Canons, he merely replied that he had nothing but a prebend at Salisbury, and that if they took that from him, much good might it do them ! †

Clearly, nothing could be done with so very sturdy a Protestant; and we ought not, perhaps, to regret the excessive earnestness in the cause of Protestantism which resulted in the compilation of the well-known Book of Martyrs. We are unable to say exactly

* "John Day, a Suffolk man," says Professor Morley, "had been busy in Edward VI.'s time as a printer of Bibles. Under Mary he was at one time a prisoner, at one time an exile. Under Elizabeth he had a printing-office, growing in size, against the City wall by Aldersgate, and shops for the sale of his books in several parts of London. Letters to Fox are extant addressed to him as 'dwelling with Master Day, the printer, at Aldersgate,' and also to 'Master John Fox, at his house in Grubbe Street.' In Grub Street, then, we have, during the early years of Elizabeth, John Fox, the Martyrologist, housed in a quality not unlike that of a bookseller's hack, though he and his bookseller were actually fellow-workers with a common aim, and that the noblest, whereby to earn bread in the service of their country."

† Fuller, "Church History," book ix. 68.

when and where this famous book was begun; but it is probable that the idea of its compilation first occurred to Fox when engaged in studying the history of the Church at college,* and he was doubtless confirmed in his intention by the religious persecution of which he was himself a victim. It was at Strasburg, in 1554, that he published the first volume of the work, under the title of "Commentarii Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum, maximarumque per totam Europam persecutionem à Wicklevi Temporibus;" but it was, as we have seen, only at Basle, whilst he was working as editor for Oporinus, that he found time to proceed with his laborious task. He did not, indeed, undertake it single-handed. There seems no doubt that he received considerable assistance in the collection and arrangement of material from such men as Bishop Aylmer† and Archbishop Grindal; and possibly he was indebted to many others of those scholarly reformers who fled to the Continent during the reign of Mary.

When we remember that the work was originally published in Latin, we can understand how great was the labour Fox bestowed upon it. The first folio edition of the whole was given to the world in 1559,‡ and, during the twelve or thirteen months that

* It is said it was first suggested to him by Lady Jane Grey.

† Author of the reply to Knox's "First Blast of the Trumpet against the Monstruous Regiment of Women," entitled "An Harborowe for Faithful and True Subjects against the late blown Blast," &c. (1559.)

‡ "Rerum in Ecclesia gestarum, quae postremis et periculosis his temporibus evenerunt, maximarumque persecutionum ac Sanctorum Dei Martyrum, caeterarumque rerum si quae insignioris exempli sint, Commentarii: in qua de rebus per Angliam et Scotiam gesto, atque in primis de horrenda sub Maria nuper Regina persecutione narratio

followed, Fox occupied the time he spent at Aldgate in preparing for the press the English translation, which finally appeared in 1562, under the title of "Acts and Monuments of these latter and perillous dayes, touching matters of the Church, wherein are comprehended and described the great Persecutions and horrible Troubles that have been wrought and practised by the Romish Prelates, especiallye in this Realme of England and Scotlande, from the Yeare of our Lorde a Thousand unto the tyme now present. Gathered and collected according to the true Copies and Wrytinges certificatorie, as well of the Parties themselves that suffered, as also out of the Bishops' Registers which were the doers thereof."

The success of the book was immediate and decisive. Like a still more celebrated man of modern times, Fox woke up one morning and found himself famous. The time was perfectly adapted for the publication of a work so strongly tinged with Protestant feeling, and the author obtained his reward in the universal popularity of his *magnum opus*. He received the cordial approbation of the heads of the Church, and the "Acts and Monuments" were ordered to be set up in every one of the parish churches of England, as well as in the common halls of archbishops, bishops, deans, archdeacons, and heads of colleges. Abundant testimony was, and has since been given, to the trustworthiness of the facts related. Camden has this

continetur." This edition contained, besides some very interesting matter not included in the English translation, Bishop Hooper's "Appellatio ad Parlamentum," and some papers sent by Hooper to Bullinger, which, until discovered in this volume, were considered to be irretrievably lost.

reference to Fox and his book:* "Ex eruditorum numero obiit Johannes Foxus Oxoniensis, qui Ecclesiasticam Angliae Historiam sive Martyrologiam indefesso veritatis studio, primum Latine postea Anglice auctius, magna cum laude contexuit;" and Strype† remarks that "Mr. Fox must not go without the commendation of a most painful searcher into records, archives, and repositories of original acts and letters of state, and a great collector of MSS. All the world is infinitely beholden to him for abundance of extracts thence communicated to us in his volumes. And as he has both been found most diligent, so most strictly faithful and true in his transcriptions." Archbishop Whitgift,‡ after having "read over his 'Acts and Monuments' from the one end to the other," declared that "Mr. Fox hath very diligently and faithfully laboured in this matter, and searched out the truth of it as learnedly as I knowe any man to have done;" whilst Bishop Burnet,§ "having compared these 'Acts and Monuments' with the records," confessed that "he had never been able to discover any errors or prevarications in them, but the utmost fidelity and exactness."‖

The title-page probably indicates with sufficient exactness the scope of Fox's work; but it may be added that, commencing with a rapid, though complete and accurate summary of the early persecutions, it

* "Annales," p. 558, 8vo. ed. † "Annals of the Reformation."
‡ "Defence of the Answer to the Admonition."
§ Preface to "History of the Reformation."
‖ Wood is less complimentary (see the "Athenæ," pp. 532-3). He says Fox has "committed many errors, by trusting to the relations of poor simple people;" but he owns that the "Acts and Monuments" will remain "as long as literature remains, a monument of his industry, his laborious research, and his sincere piety."

comes finally to treat, with a detail which could only have been achieved by one who was contemporary with the events described, the sufferings of "Protestants" at the hands of "Catholics" in the sixteenth century. Whether the extreme minuteness of some of the narratives is altogether pleasant to a modern reader, may well be doubted; but there can be no question of its value from an historical point of view, and probably it was this very particularity of statement which rendered it so popular when it first appeared. The Englishmen of Elizabeth's reign were glad to read in Fox's pages of the heroic trials through which their ancestors had passed in the defence of their religious freedom, and it is not too much to say that the "Acts and Monuments" had, humanly speaking, almost as much to do with the defeat of the Spanish Armada as the prowess of Lord Howard and Sir Francis Drake. It certainly tended to quicken and increase among the people that hatred and horror of all things pertaining to the Church of Rome which seem scarcely to have subsided even under the influence of the broader sympathies of the nineteenth century.

It is impossible, within the limits at my disposal, to furnish any very satisfactory specimens of this remarkable book; but it may give my readers some conception of its simple pathos if I summarise, very briefly, one of its most touching episodes, making use, as far as possible, of Fox's own words. I turn to the narrative of Anne Askew, and begin at that place where, after putting her through sundry examinations upon points of faith, her tormentors decided to inflict upon her the pains of torture:—

"Then," says Fox, "did they put her on the rack, and thereon they kept her a long time, and because she lay still and did not cry, the Lord Chancellor and Mr. Rich took pains to rack her with their own hands, till she was nigh dead. The lieutenant then caused her to be loosed from the rack, when she immediately swooned, and then recovered again. After that she sat two hours reasoning with the Lord Chancellor upon the bare floor, where he, with many flattering words, persuaded her to leave her opinion; but her Lord God, thanks to his everlasting goodness! gave her grace to persevere. Then she was brought to a house and laid on a bed, with as weary and painful bones as ever had patient Job, yet expressing her thanks to God. Then the Lord Chancellor sent her word, if she would leave her opinion she should want for nothing; if she would not, she should forthwith to Newgate, and so be burned. She sent him word again, that she would rather die than break her faith—praying that God would open his eyes, that the truth might take place.

"Touching the order of her racking in the Tower, thus it was: first, she was led down into a dungeon, where Sir Anthony Knevet, the lieutenant, commanded his gaoler to pinch her with the rack: which being done so much as he thought sufficient, he went about to take her down, supposing that he had done enough. But Wriothesley, the Chancellor, displeased that she was loosed so soon, confessing nothing, commanded the lieutenant to strain her on the rack again, which, because he refused to do, tendering the weakness of the woman, he was threatened, the Chancellor saying,

that he would signify his disobedience unto the king; and so, consequently, he and Mr. Rich, throwing off their gowns, would needs play the tormentors themselves, first asking her if she were with child? to whom she answering again, said, 'Ye shall not need to spare me for that, but do your wills upon me;' and so quietly and patiently praying unto the Lord, she abode their tyranny, till her bones and joints were almost plucked asunder.

"She had now been so tormented, that she could neither live long in such distress, nor yet by her adversaries be suffered to die in secret. The day of her execution being appointed, she was brought to Smithfield in a chair, because she could not walk, from the cruel effects of the torments. When she was brought to the stake, she was fastened to it by the middle with a chain that held up her body. Three others were brought to suffer with her, and for the same offence. The martyrs being chained to the stake, and all things ready for the fire, Dr. Shaxton, then appointed to preach, began his sermon. Anne Askew hearing and answering him, where he said well, she approved; where he said amiss, expressing firmly her dissent, saying, 'He speaketh without the book.'

"The sermon being finished, the martyrs, standing at three several stakes, ready to their martyrdom, began their prayers. The multitude of the people was exceeding great, the place where they stood being railed about to keep out the press. Upon the bench, under St. Bartholomew's Church, sat Wriothesley, the old Duke of Norfolk, the old Earl of Bedford, the Lord Mayor, and divers others. Before the fire was

kindled, one of the bench hearing that they had gunpowder about them, and being afraid lest the faggots, by strength of the gunpowder, would come flying about their ears, began to be afraid; but the Earl of Bedford, observing how the gunpowder was not laid under the faggots, but only about their bodies to rid them of their pain, which having vent, there was no danger to them, so diminished that fear.

"Then the Lord Chancellor sent to Anne Askew, offering to her the king's pardon if she would recant: a letter said to be written by the king was put into her hand; but she, refusing once to look upon it, made this answer again, 'I came not hither to deny my Lord and Master.' Then were letters likewise offered to the others, who in like manner, following the constancy of the woman, denied not only to receive them, but also to look upon them, continuing to cheer and exhort each other by the end of their sufferings, and the glory they were about to enter; whereupon the Lord Mayor, commanding fire to be put to them, cried with a loud voice, 'Fiat justitia!' Thus," says Fox, "were these blessed martyrs compassed in with flames of fire, as holy sacrifices unto God and his truth."

With this brief series of extracts, I content myself with commending the perusal of the work to all my readers, not only on account of its intrinsic merits, which are obviously very great indeed, but for the insight it affords us into the conscientious and deep-rooted Protestantism of the English nation in the reign of Elizabeth. It is not by any means the only

of the consideration of the student or the general reader. Eleven years before the first appearance of his Latin folio, Fox had published, in 1548, a curious little work, entitled "De non plectendis Morte Adulteris Consultatio," of which one of his biographers remarks that, "amidst some doubtful propositions it contains many admirable remarks," though "as a whole it is inferior, both in style and in sentiment, to the later productions of the excellent author." * In 1551 he issued a tract, "De Censurâ seu Excommunicatione Ecclesiastica, Interpellatio ad Archiep. Cantuar.;" and, in 1552, certain "Tables of Grammar." But more important than any of these,—more considerable in design and execution, and more successful in its public reception,—was his Latin comedy, "De Christo Triumphante," written, it is believed, at Basle, and published first in 1551, and again in 1556 and 1672, in which Christus, Eva, Saulus qui et Paulus, and Maria Petris take the leading parts, while "principalities and powers of darkness" frequently come forth to be guilty of "spiritual wickedness in high places." Otherwise, the *dramatis personæ* are rather numerous, amounting to about twenty-five characters, among whom angels and *adolescentes* are included. The story is taken, of course, from New Testament history, of which the "Comœdia" ("Apocalyptica," as Fox calls it on his title-page) is merely one of those dramatized versions in which our early literature is so prolific. It was translated into English by Richard

* It was reprinted, with variations, in the following year, under the title of "De lapsis in Ecclesiam Recipiendis per Pœnitentiam Resipiscentibus Consultatio, in qua ostenditur discrimen inter lapsos et

Day, and was published in that form in 1579, 1607, and 1672 successively.*

Fox's other writings may be dismissed with comparative brevity. They consist, as far as I can ascertain, of the following separate publications, which do not, of course, include the numerous editorial productions with which he must have supplied John Day, the printer, during his connection with him:—"Ad inclytos ac præponentes Angliæ proceres, Ordines et Status totamque ejus gentis Nobilitatem pro afflictio fratribus supplicatio" (1557); "Locorum communium logicalium Tituli et Ordinatione 150, ad Seriem Prædicamentorum decem descripti" (1557); "Probationes et Resolutiones de Re et Materiâ Sacramenti Eucharastici" (1563)); "Contra Hier. Osorium ejusque odiosas Insectiones pro Evangelicæ veritatis Defensione" (1577); "De Olivâ Evangelica: Concio in Baptismo Judæi habita Londini, primo mens. April.: Cum Enarratione Capitis undecimi D. Pauli ad Romanos" (1578); "Papa Confutatiis, vel sacra et Apostolica Ecclesia Papam Confutans" (1580); "De Christo gratia justificante contra Jesuïtas" (1583); "Pandectæ Locorum communium" (1585); "Disputatio contra Jesuitas et 'eorum Argumenta, quibus inhærentum justitiam ex Aristotele confirmant" (1585); and "Eicasmi, seu Meditationes in Apocal. S. Johannis Apostoli et Evangelistae" (1587).†

I have purposely omitted from this list any refer-

* "Dedicated," says Wood, "to all schoolmasters, to the end that it might be admitted into all their respective schools for the admitted elegance of its style, by T. C., Master of Arts of Sidney Coll., in Cambridge."

† Wood, "Athenæ Oxonienses," i. 531.

ence to the edition of the Saxon Gospels published by Fox in 1571. This, like the "Acts and Monuments," was dedicated to the queen, and was the result of a special study of our earlier English, which Fox had undertaken with a view to the prosecution of this work. It is especially valuable as indicating the direction in which the Elizabethan divines turned their studies, with a view to proving the unbroken continuity of the Church of England from the earliest times.

The only other publication of our author to which I shall refer, as showing how firmly he was possessed by the spirit of Protestantism, is the "Sermon of Christ Crucified," preached at Paul's Cross in 1570, and published in the course of the same year. In 1571 it was translated into Latin, and in both languages obtained an unusually wide circulation. The text was from the fifth chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which he thus translates: "For Christ therefore, or in Christ's name, we come to you as messengers, even as God himself desiring you, we pray you for Christ's stead that you will be reconciled unto God. For Him who knew no sin, God hath made to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "I remember," he says, "about the beginning of Queen Mary's reign, there was a certain message sent, not from Heaven, but from Rome—not from God, but from the Pope—not from any apostle, but by a certain Cardinal Pole, a legate of the Pope's own white side. And what was the message? Forsooth, that the realm of England should be reconciled to the

course in which the tenacity of his faith, and especially his holy abhorrence of the papal system, is strikingly exemplified. It is followed by a prayer and a postscript to the Papists; and it is said that this was the last, as it was the first, sermon that he delivered at Paul's Cross. Seventeen years afterwards the good old man peacefully breathed his last in his lodging in the City, and in the register of burials was inserted the record, as plain and unpretending as he was himself,—

"April 20th, 1587—John Fox, householder and preacher."

THE FIRST ENGLISH TRAGEDY AND COMEDY.

Two years after the publication of the Book of Martyrs, there appeared in London a surreptitious and inaccurate edition of the first regular tragedy of the English language. For many years before that time the stage had been occupied by dramatic performances of various kinds; but though morals and mysteries were the natural and inevitable predecessors of the modern play,* they differ from it essentially in form and character; and to the author of "Gorboduc, or the History of Ferrex and Porrex," is certainly due the credit of producing the first work which can, by any stretch of the imagination, be termed our earliest dramatic poem.

It may be as well to state at once, that the authorship of "Gorboduc" is ascribed to more than one person; in fact, to two—to Thomas Norton, who is described on the title-page of 1565 as the author of the first three acts, and to Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst, who is represented as the contributor of the last two acts. "But the force of internal evidence," says

* See Collier's "History of Dramatic Poetry."

Warton, "often prevails over the authority of assertion, a testimony which is diminished by time, and may be rendered suspicious from a variety of other circumstances. Throughout the whole piece there is an invariable uniformity of diction and versification. Sackville has two poems of considerable length in the 'Mirror for Magistrates,' which fortunately furnish us with the means of comparison; and every scene in 'Gorboduc' is visibly marked with his characteristical manner, which consists in a perspicuity of style, and a command of numbers, superior to the tone of his times. Thomas Norton's poetry is of a very different and subordinate cast; and if we may judge from his share in our metrical psalmody, he seems to have been much more properly qualified to share in the miserable mediocrity of Sternhold's stanza, and to write spiritual rhymes for the solace of his illuminated brethren, than to reach the bold and impassioned elevations of tragedy." * "It is difficult," adds Ashby, "to conceive how Sackville and Norton, whose general poetic talents were so widely different, could write distinct parts of a play, the whole of which should appear of uniform merit." I myself am inclined to believe that, though Norton's name has been associated with that of Sackville, his share in the production was very slight indeed, and probably consisted of little more than a general revision of the work when finished. Otherwise, I imagine it was entirely Sackville's, both in the design and in the execution; and it is not unlikely that Norton's name would never have appeared in connection with it but for his intimacy with Lord

* "History of English Poetry," ed. Hazlitt, iv. 265-6.

Buckhurst in the Inner Temple.* He was born, it appears, at Sharpenhoe, in Bedfordshire, in 1532, and served in his youth under the banner of the Protector Somerset, afterwards becoming a barrister-at-law and solicitor for the City of London. He translated at least twenty-eight of the Psalms, that excited the disgust of Warton, and was the author and translator of several polemical and political productions of no great merit or importance.

Sackville was born in 1536, at Buckhurst, in Sussex, and was the son of the Sir Richard Sackville, whose only title to the remembrance of posterity, irrespectively of this relationship, was his patronage of Roger Ascham. At the age of fifteen or sixteen the younger Sackville was sent to Oxford, where he received his education at Hart Hall, and from whence he went successively to Cambridge† and the Inner Temple. He seems to have spent a considerable portion of his earlier years in travelling through France and Italy; and at this period of his life alone was he, as Spence observes, what perhaps all persons of his birth ought to be, a poet. His father, dying in 1566, left him a large fortune, the greatest part of which he soon squandered in his magnificent manner of living; but in the end, it is said, he became a better economist. He served in Parliament,

* Collier, however, is inclined to support the co-authorship of the play. See "History of Dramatic Poetry," ii. 485-6. In 1560, Jasper Heywood couples the names of the two friends as follows:—

"There Sackvylde's sonnetts sweetely sauste,
And featly fyned be;
There Norton's ditties do delight," &c.

† Wood, "Athenæ Oxonienses," i. 767.

both in the reign of Queen Mary and of Queen Elizabeth. In the former, he was member for Westmoreland at the age of twenty-one; in the latter, he was member for East Grinstead, and took an active part in the business of the House. In 1567 he was created Baron Buckhurst; in 1571, he was sent as ambassador to Charles IX. of France; and in 1587, he was dispatched on a similar enterprise to the States of Holland. In 1588, he was made one of the Knights of the Garter; in 1591, Chancellor of the University of Oxford; and in 1598, Lord High Treasurer of England. He was continued in that office by King James I., who, in 1603, advanced him to the dignity of Earl of Dorset, which he enjoyed until his death at the council-board, from apoplexy, in 1608.

His two great poems, "The Induction to the Mirror for Magistrates, and The Complaint of Henry Duke of Buckingham," which forms part of "The Mirror," have had the honour of being warmly praised by the most distinguished critics; nor has the "Tragedie of Gorboduc," though certainly inferior to his other writings, been without its admirers. Sir Philip Sidney, in his "Apologie for Poetrie,"* speaks of it as "full of stately speeches and well-sounding phrases, clyming to the height of Seneca his stile, and as full of notable moralitie, which it doth most delightfully teach." Pope, also, "whose taste in such matters was very different," remarks Hazlitt,† "from that of Sir Philip Sidney's," says, in even stronger terms, "that the writers of the succeeding age might have improved as

much in other respects, by copying from him a propriety in the sentiments, an unaffected perspicuity of style, and an easy flow in the numbers; in a word, that chastity, correctness, and gravity of style, which are so essential to tragedy, and which all tragic poets who followed, not excepting Shakespeare himself, either little understood or perpetually neglected." This, to be sure, is somewhat extravagant praise, and Hazlitt is careful to show us that he does not agree with it. "As a work of genius," he says, "'Gorboduc' may be set down as nothing, for it contains hardly a memorable line or passage; as a work of art, and the first of its kind attempted in the language, it may be considered as a monument of the taste and skill of the authors. Its merit is confined to the regularity of the plot and metre, to its general good sense, and strict attention to common decorum."

This much said, it must be confessed that almost everything has been stated in its favour that can well be urged. Hazlitt truly complains that "the principal characters make as many invocations to the manes of their children, their country, and their friends, as Cicero in his 'Orations,' and all the topics insisted upon are open, direct, urged in the face of day, with no more attention to time or place, to an enemy who overhears, or an accomplice to whom they are addressed; in a word, with no more dramatic insinuation or by-play than the pleadings in a court of law." "In the dramatic conduct of this tale," says Warton, "the unities of time and place are visibly violated."*

of Gorboduc" is a great work of genius. It is simply remarkable as the first attempt (with which we are acquainted) to approximate towards the regular drama, and as the first considerable poem of any merit whatever in which blank verse is used. Its origin is to be found in the festivities which took place at the Inner Temple in 1561, when this play was acted as part of a grand Christmas entertainment, and afterwards before the Queen at Whitehall. On both occasions it was represented by the gentlemen of the society; and on the latter it was given on a large decorated scaffold in the Queen's Hall at Westminster. A surreptitious edition of it was, as I have said, printed in 1565, and so carelessly was it produced, that its author or authors felt compelled to issue a corrected version in 1570,* in which the preface set forth, in true Elizabethan phraseology, how "this tragedie was for furniture of part of the grand Christmasse in the Inner Temple, first written, about nine years ago, by the right honourable Thomas, now Lord Buckherst, and by T. Norton; and after shewed before her Majestie, and never intended by the authors thereof to be published: Yet one W(illiam) G(riffith), getting a copie thereof at some yong man's hand, that lacked a little money and much discretion, in the last great plage, an. 1565, about five yeares past, while the said Lord was out of England, and T. Norton out of London, and neither of them both made privie, put it forth exceedingly corrupted."

The "argument of the tragedie" is given as fol-

* Reproduced in the "Ancient British Drama" (1810), from which my own extracts are made. In the edition of 1570 it is called "Ferrex and Porrex."

lows: "Gorboduc, King of Brittaine, divided his realme, in his life-time, to his sonnes, Ferrex and Porrex. The sonnes fell to discention. The yonger killed the elder. The mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the yonger. The people moved with the crueltie of the fact, rose in rebellion, and slew both father and mother. The nobilitie assembled, and most terribly destroyed the rebels; and afterwards, for want of issue of the prince, whereby the succession of the Crowne became uncertain, they fell to civil warre, in which both they and many of their issues were slain, and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted."

The "names of the speakers"—it will be observed that they are not called "dramatis personæ"—are Gorboduc, "King of Great Brittaine;" Videna, "queene and wife to King Gorboduc;" Ferrex, "elder sonne to King Gorboduc;" Porrex, "younger sonne to King Gorboduc;" Clayton, Duke of Cornwall; Fergus, Duke. of Albany; Mandud, Duke of Leogris; Gwenard, Duke of Cumberland; Eubulus, secretary to the king; Arostus, a counsellor to the king; Dordan, "a counsellor assigned by the king to his eldest sonne Ferrex;" Philander, "a counsellor assigned by the king to his yongest sonne Porrex (both being of the olde kinges counsell before);" Hermon, "a parasite remaining with Ferrex;" Tyndar, "a parasite remaining with Porrex;" Nuntius, "a messenger of the eldest brother's death;" Nuntius, "a messenger of the Duke Fergus rising in arms;" Marcella, "a lady of the queenes privie-chamber;" and Chorus, "four auncient and sage men of Brittaine."

It will be noticed that there is only one female character in the piece, whom Warton shrewdly suspects a modern writer of tragedy would have made in love with the young murdered prince.

The play is in five acts, and as it was evidently modelled on the tragedies of Seneca,* there is a chorus at the close of every act except the last. Each act opens with a masque, or dumb show, "shadowing by an allegorical exhibition the matter that was immediately to follow. Not," says Warton, "that this mute mimicry was always typical of the ensuing incidents. It sometimes served for a compendious introduction of such circumstances as could not commodiously be comprehended within the bounds of the representation. It sometimes supplied deficiencies, and covered the want of business."

Thus, "the Order of the Domme Shew before the first act, and the signification thereof," is described in this way:—"First, the musicke of violenze began to play, during which came in upon the stage sixe wilde men, clothed in leaves. Of whom the first bare on his necke a fagot of small stickes, which they all, both severallye and together, assayed with all their strengthes to breake; but it could not be broken by them. At the length, one of them plucked out one of the stickes and brake it; and the next plucking out all the other sticks, one after another, did easily breake the same, being severed; which, being conjoyned, they had before attempted in vaine. After they had this done, they departed the stage, and the musike ceased. Hereby was signified, that a state, knit in unitie, doth continue strong against all force; but

* Morley: "A First Sketch of English Literature."

being divided, is easily destroyed, as befel upon King Gorboduc dividing his lande to his two sonnes, which he before held in monarchie, and upon the discretion of the brethren, to whom it was divided."

The first act opens where Videna is informing Ferrex of his father's intention to divide the kingdom. Ferrex declines to believe that Gorboduc will act in this wise; for, he says,—

"Just hath my father been to every wight;
His first injustice he will not extend
To me."

And so he begs her to content herself, for she shall see the end. "Even this day," replies Videna—

"He will endeavour to procure assent
Of all his counsell to his fonde devise."

In the second scene, accordingly, Gorboduc is found explaining his proposal to a council composed of Arostus, Philander, and Eubulus:—

"My purpose is to leave unto them twaine,
The realm divided in two sondry partes:
The one, Ferrex myne elder sonne shall have;
The other, shall the yonger Porrex rule.
That both my purpose may more firmly stande,
And eke that they may better rule their charge,
I mean forthwith to place them in the same;
That in my life they may both learne to rule,
And I may joy to see their ruling well."

Arostus is of opinion that the plan will answer:—

"Great be the profites that shall growe thereof;
Your age in quiet shall the longer last,
Your lasting age shall be their longer stay."

Philander is likewise of opinion that the plan is admirable, but doubts if it should be so ordered as to take effect in the old monarch's lifetime:—

"But so to place them while your life do last,
To yelde to them your royall governaunce,
To be above them onely in the name
Of father, not in kingly state also,
I thinke not good for you, for them, nor us."

Eubulus is altogether dissatisfied with the arrangement, and assures the king that—

"To parte your realme unto my lordes your sonnes
I think not good for you, ne yet for them,
But worst of all for this our native land;"

adding, in words which must have had a peculiar significance for an Elizabethan audience:—

"Within one land, one single rule is best:
Divided reigns do make divided hartes,
But peace preserves the countrey and the prince. . .
Your grace remembreth how in passed yeres,
The mightie Brute, first prince of all this lande,
Possessed the same, and ruled it well in one;
He thinking that the compasse did suffice
For his three sonnes three kingdoms eke to make,
Cut it in three, as you would now in twaine:
But how much British blood hath since been spilt
To joyne again the sondred unitie!
What princes slaine before their timely houre!
What waste of townes and people in the lande!
What treasons heaped on murders and on spoiles!"

But Gorboduc, having evidently made up his mind to have his scheme adopted, puts aside the counsel of Eubulus, and declares his determination to divide the country into two parts, one to the north and one to the south of the Humber, the northern part of which is to go to Porrex and the southern part to Ferrex. The chorus then proceeds to draw the moral of this opening act. . .

The "Order and Signification of the Domme Shew before the Second Act" is described as follows:—"First, the musicke of the comettes began to play, during which came upon the stage a king, accompanied

with a nombre of his nobilitie and gentlemen. And after he had placed himself on a chaire of state prepared for him, there came and kneled before him a grave and aged gentleman, and offred up a cuppe unto him of wyne in a glasse, which the king refused. After him commes a brave and lustie yong gentleman, and presents the king with a cup of golde filled with poyson, which the king accepted, and drinking the same, immediately fell downe dead upon the stage, and so was carryed thence away by his lordes and gentlemen, and then the musicke ceased. Hereby was signified, that as glasse by nature holdeth no poyson, but is clere, and may easily be seen through, ne boweth by any arte; so, a faythful counsellor holdeth no treason, but is playne and open, ne yeldeth to anie indiscrete affection, but geveth holesome counsell, which the yll advised prince refuseth. The delightfull golde filled with poyson, betokeneth flattery, which, under faire seeming of pleasant wordes, beareth deadly poyson, which destroyed the prince that receyveth it, as befell in the two brethren, Ferrex and Porrex, who, refusing the holesome advice of grave counsellours, credited these young parasites, and brought to themselves death and destruction thereby."

The first scene of the second act introduces us, therefore, to Ferrex, and Hermon, and Dordan, and shows us how Hermon, the parasite, endeavours to stir up the angry feelings of Ferrex against his father and brother; whilst Dordan, the true counsellor, exerts his influence over the young prince to prevent such unhappy dissension. In the end, we find that Hermon's insinuations have prevailed, and Ferrex leaves the

stage expressing his intention so to prepare himself in secret that, if the malice or the lust of Porrex should break forth in arms, he might withstand his rage and keep his own. An exactly similar incident takes place in the second scene, where Porrex hesitates between the advice of the parasite Tyndar and the true counsellor Philander, and finally determines that Ferrex is arming against him:—

> "Shall I leve leasure by my fonde delayes
> To Ferrex to oppresse me all unaware?
> I will not, but I will invade his realme,
> And seeke the traitour prince within his coast."

Thereupon, Philander hastens to inform the king of this determination, in order that—

> "By good advise, by awe of father's name,
> By force of wiser lordes, this kindled hate
> May yet be quenched ere it consume us all."

The chorus then, in four rhymed stanzas, deplore the rashness and inconsiderateness of youth, and reprobate the traitors who undermine the love of brethren.

The "Order and Signification of the Domme Shewe before the thirde act" is happily less complicated than its predecessors:—"First, the musicke of flutes began to playe, during which came in upon the stage a company of mourners all clad in black, betokening death and sorowe to ensue upon the ill-advised misgouernment and discention of brethrene, as befell upon the murder of Ferrex by his younger brother. After the mourners had passed thryse about the stage, they departed, and then the musicke ceased." The act itself consists of one scene only, and exhibits Gorboduc in council with Eubulus, Arostus, Philander, and Nuntius, to consider the evil news which has been brought to him

advised to exercise his power as a king, and his authority as a father, when another messenger arrives with intelligence of the murder of Ferrex at the hands of Porrex, and the act closes with the old king's vow of vengeance against his younger son. The chorus that follows is praised by Warton for its "moral beauties and spirit," and turns on the "lust of kingdome" and "the cruell flames of civyll fier."

The fourth act is longer, and the dumb show is more cumbrous in proportion. "First, the musicke of howeboies began to play, during which there came from under the stage, as though out of hell, three fairies, Alecto, Megera, and Ctisiphone, clad in blacke garments sprinkled with blood and flames, their bodies girt with snakes, their heds spred with serpentes instead of heire, the one bearing in her hand a snake, the other a whip, and the third a burning firebrand; each driving before them a king and a queene, which moved by furies unnaturally had slaine their owne children. The names of the kinges and queenes were these, Tantalus, Medea, Athanas, Ino, Cambises, Althea; after that the furies and these had passed about the stage thrise, they departed, and then the musicke ceased; hereby was signified the unnaturall murders to follow, that is to say, Porrex slaine by his own mother, and of King Gorboduc, and Queen Videna, killed by their own subjects."

In the first scene Videna is discovered alone, mourning for the death of her first-born, and breathing revenge against his murderer, Porrex:—

"Is my beloved sonne, is my sweet childe,
My deare Ferrex, my joye, my lyves delight,

O heynous traitour both to heaven and earth,
Thou, Porrex, thou this damned dede hast wrought,
Thou, Porrex, thou shalt dearly bye* the same."

In the second, Porrex, brought before his father, expresses his repentance for his dreadful crime, and does not ask to live, but shows how the bond of love between him and his brother had been unknit by the partition of the kingdom. He contends that Ferrex was preparing secretly for his destruction.

"Then saw I how he smiled with slaying knife
Wrapped under cloke; then saw I depe deceite
Lurke in his face, and death prepared for me;
Even nature moved me then to holde my life
More deare to me than his, and led this hand . . .
To shed his bloud, and seek my safetie so."

Gorboduc then sends him from his presence as "an accursed childe," and almost immediately afterwards in rushes Marcella, to tell that Porrex has been slain in his sleep by his mother, Videna:—

"Will ever wight beleve that such hard hart
Could rest within the cruell mother's brest,
With her own hand to slaye her onely sonne?
But out, alas! these eyes behelde the same,
They saw the driery sight, and are become
Most ruthefull recordes of the bloody fact."

It is remarkable that the murder is not actually performed upon the stage. "Perhaps," suggests Warton, "the players had not yet learned to die, nor was the poniard so essential an article as at present among the implements of the property-room." Certain it is, that the concluding portion of Marcella's narrative is by far the most striking passage in the play, and has been praised not only by the critic just quoted, but by Hazlitt, who describes it as the only one which he can

instance as rising above the didactic tone of mediocrity into the pathos of poetry :—*

> "Ah, noble prince, how oft have I behelde
> Thee mounted on thy fierce and trampling stede,
> Shining in armour bright before the tilt,
> And with thy mistresse sleve tied on thy helme,
> And charge thy staffe, to please thy ladies eye,
> That bowed the head peece of thy fiendly foe!
> How oft in armes on horse to bend the mace,
> How oft in armes on foot to break the sworde,
> Which never now these eyes may see againe!"

The chorus that follows is considered by Warton to be the best in the tragedy.

The dumb show of the fifth and final act opened with the sound of "drommes and fluites," "during which there came forth upon the stage a company of harga-busiers and of armed men, all in order of battaile. These, after their peeces discharged, and that the armed men had three times marched about the stage, departed, and then the drommes and fluites did cease. Hereby was signified tumults, rebellions, armes, and civil warres to follow, as fell in the realms of Great Brittayne, which, by the space of fiftie yeares and more, continued in civill war betwene the nobilitie after the death of King Gorboduc, and of his issues, for want of certayn limitation in succession of the crowne, till the time of Dunwallo Mohuntius, who reduced the land to monarchie."

The first scene opens with the Dukes of Cornwall, Albany, Loegris, and Cumberland upon the stage, and we learn that the people have risen in rebellion and slain the king and queen. "Shall subjects dare with force," asks Gwenard,

* "Elizabethan Literature," Lecture II.

"To worke revenge upon their princes pact?"

"O wretched state!" he cries—

"Where those rebellious hartes
Are not rent out even from their living breastes,
And with the body throwen unto the foules
As carrion foode, for terrour of the rest!"

It is agreed that—

"Though kinges forget to governe as they ought,
Yet subjects must obey as they are bounde,"

and measures must be taken to put down the traitors. Eubulus favours the great lords with his advice as to the means that they should now adopt, and presently they all march off, leaving the Duke of Albany behind to meditate how best he may secure in his own hands the sovereign power. Then he, too, leaves the stage, with the avowed intention of collecting troops for his own special enterprise.

In the last scene of all, almost the only incident is the arrival of a messenger with the news that the duke is advancing against the other nobles with an army of twenty thousand men. The remainder of the play is occupied with the departure of the lords to fight with Albany, while Eubulus, as usual, remains behind to moralise upon the general unhappiness of the state of things in terms which are very suggestive of the times in which the tragedy was written. Thus, he deplores the confusion which must happen

"When we unto the prince,
Whom death or sodeine happe of life bereaves,
No certaine heire remaines, such certain heire,
As not all onely is the rightfull heire,
But to the realm is so made knowen to be,
And trouth thereby vested in subjectes hartes,
To owe fayth there, where right is knowen to rest."

The drama concludes with a consolatory couplet,

which (it has been remarked) is curiously Tennysonian in its style and sentiment :*—

> "For right will alwayes live, and rise at length,
> But wrong can never take deepe roote to last."

Such is a brief outline of a tragedy which appears to have been very popular in its day, and is certainly no insignificant predecessor of the later Elizabethan drama. The greater glory belongs, of course, to the men of genius—to Shakespeare, Marlowe, Webster, and Ben Jonson—who brought our dramatic literature to such perfection; but it must not be forgotten that they trod so firmly only because Sackville led the way, and that no inconsiderable honour is due to him who first showed his countrymen of what the regular tragedy was capable.

Side by side with the first English tragedy, it may be interesting to place specimens of the first English comedy, which was printed and published in 1566, when Shakespeare was two years old. That this was the case we know from an entry in the register of the Stationers' Company; but it was not ascertained until early in the present century that Nicholas Udall was the author of this curious play. It was thought that no copy of it remained in existence, until, in 1818, the Rev. T. Briggs, an old Etonian, became the possessor of the unique and valuable copy, which he afterwards presented to, and which is still preserved in, the

* As a rule, however, nothing can be more bald and even than the blank verse in this play. It is rarely that a pause occurs anywhere but at the end of the line, and hence the versification has a monotony which, I need not say, is as far as possible from being the characteristic of Mr. Tennyson's verse.

library of Eton College. This was duly printed in the year of its discovery, and is, of course, the foundation of all succeeding editions, including those by Mr. Archer and the Shakespeare Society. But it was only about the year 1805 that there was any positive evidence to connect the comedy with Nicholas Udall. Then Mr. Collier, to whom all lovers of old English literature owe so much, happened to be reading Sir William Wilson's "Rule of Reason," first printed in 1550-1, and there he found, under the heading of "The Ambiguitie," a quotation from "Ralph Roister Doister," "as an example of suche doubtful writing, whiche by reason of poincting maie have double sense, and contrarie meaning, taken out of an enterlude made by Nicolas Udall."*

Udall was born in Hampshire in 1504, and was descended from a family which of recent years had been residing at Wykcham.† He was admitted a scholar of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on June 18th, 1520; took his degree of B.A.‡ in May, 1524; was elected probationer fellow in September of the same year, and took his degree of M.A. in 1534. One of his best friends at Oxford was John Leland, the antiquary, with whose assistance he composed, in 1532, the pageant exhibited by the mayor and citizens of London, when Anne Boleyn entered the city after her marriage. This is included among the royal manuscripts, and is there described as "A Copie of divers and sundry verses as well in Latin as in

* "Bibliographical Account of Early English Literature." (1865.)
† Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses."
‡ Wood's "Fasti Oxonienses," i. 65, ed. 1815.



Englishe, devised and made partely by John Leland and partely by Nicholas Udale, whereof sum were sette up and sum were spoken and pronounced unto the most high and excellente Quene the ladie Anne, wif unto our soverain lorde King Henry the eight in many goodly and costely pageauntes exhibited and shewed by the mayre and citizens of the famous citie of London, at first tyme as his grace rode from the Towre of London through the said citie to his most glorious coronation at the monasterie of Westminster, on Whitson yeve, in the xxxvth yere of the raigne of our said soverayne lorde." * At this time Udall was a schoolmaster; and in 1533 he published and dedicated to his boys some "Floures for Latine Spekynge, selected and gathered out of Terence, and the same translated into Englysshe." This book "being esteemed good in its time, and very useful for young scholars, Joh. Leland and Tho. Newton wrote verses in commendation of it;" and as it is quoted from in "The Taming of the Shrew" (act i. scene i.), it was probably familiar to Shakespeare. The selection was made from the first three plays of Terence. A second edition, enlarged from 110 to 192 pages, appeared in 1538; and it was afterwards frequently reprinted.

In 1534 Udall was appointed to the head-mastership of Eton College, from which, however, he was dismissed in 1541,—why, it is not exactly known, but statedly as the result of an inquiry into the disappearance from the college of some silver images and other plate. These had been stolen by two of the scholars, called Hoorde and Cheney, and it was proved that the

* Arber's reprint, p. 3.

robbery had been connived at by Udall's servant, Gregory. Otherwise we know little about this portion of his career, except that he appears to have been somewhat severe in his discipline, if the following passage, taken from the "Author's Life," prefixed to "The Five Hundreth Points of Good Husbandrie," by Tusser, in 1573, is to be accepted literally :—

"From Powles I went, to Aeton sent,
To learne straightwayes, the Latin phraise,
Where fiftie three stripes given to mee,
at once I had:
For faut but small, or none at all,
It came to passe. that beat I was,
See Udall, see, the mercy of thee,
to mee poore lad."

In 1537 Udall became vicar of Braintree in Essex, a post which he retained until his resignation in 1544. Two years previously he had published a translation of the third and fourth books of Erasmus's "Apophthegms," and had been engaged with the Princess Mary and others in preparing a version of the "Paraphrase of the New Testament," by the same great writer. In 1552 he was associated with others in a translation of Gemini's "Anatomy," to which he wrote a preface; and in 1555 he was appointed to the head-mastership of Westminster School, which he retained until the monastery was established there by his former patron, Mary. He died in 1556.

He is said to have written, besides "Ralph Roister Doister," several Latin plays, the names of which have come down to us, and nothing more. Thus, Warton records that "among the writings of Udall, a celebrated master of Eton about the year 1540, are recited

Papacy, written, probably, to be acted by his scholars." Besides these he was the author of a sacred drama, entitled "Ezechias," founded on the Second Book of Kings, and acted before Queen Elizabeth at Cambridge in 1564.* But for students of English literature the one thing interesting about Nicholas Udall is the fact that he was the author of the first English comedy that we possess; and I hasten to give a brief description and analysis of this amusing work.

Its title, "Ralph Roister Doister," probably arose out of the character of the hero, who is represented as a silly and conceited English fop of the time of Henry VIII. The one word "Roister," is evidently from the old French *rustre*, a ruffian, and recalls the *rustarii*, or French freebooters of the eleventh century; the other word, "Doister," being doubtless added as a sort of jingle, and the initial letter of "Roister" suggesting the alliterative Christian name of Ralph.†

As Sackville's play was founded upon the dramas of Seneca, so Udall's comedy was modelled on the plays of Plautus and Terence,

> "Whiche amang the learned at this day beares the bell."

It seems to have been written, like so many of our modern fictions, "with a purpose;" and that purpose was to expose the folly of the vaingloriousness of

* Nichols's "Progresses of Queen Elizabeth."

† "Rafe Roister," says Collier, "is a character in Ulpian Fullwell's 'Like Will to Like' (1568 and 1587), and a 'roister-doister' is used proverbially by G. Harvey in his 'Four Letters,' &c. (1592), for a mad-brained fellow.

> 'Then roister-doister in his oily terms,'

is a line applied to Marston in 'The Return from Parnassus' (1606.)"

which Ralph is a living embodiment. As Udall himself says in his rhyming prologue:—

"Our Comedie or Enterlude which we intende to play,
Is named Roystor Doyster in deede;
Which against the vayneglorious doth invey,
Whose humour the roysting sort continually doth feede."

It is composed throughout in rhyming couplets, which admit of considerable variety in rhythm, and is divided into acts and scenes like any ordinary modern play. Its leading motive is in the courtship of Dame Christian Custance by the hero Ralph, who is accompanied in his adventures by one Matthew Merrygreek, a needy humorist, who takes advantage of Ralph's conceit and ignorance to advance his own interests in every possible way. Thus he opens the comedy with a frank declaration of his usual tactics:—

"Know ye, that for all this merie note of mine,
He might appose me now that should aske where I dine.
My lyving lieth heere and there, of Gods grace,
Sometime wyth this goodman, sometyme in that place,
Sometime Lewis Loytrer biddeth me come heere,
Somewhyles Watkin Waster maketh us good cheere . . .
Sometime I hang on Hankyn Hoddydodie's sleeve,
But thys day on Ralph Royster Doysters by his leeve.
For truly of all men he is my chiefe banker
Both for meate and money, and my chief shootanker . . .
But now of Roister Doister somewhat to expresse,
That ye may esteeme him after hys worthinesse,
In these twentie townes and seke them throughout,
Is not the like stocke, whereon to graffe a loute.
All the day long is he facing and craking
Of his great actes in fighting and fraymaking;
But when Roister Doister is put to his proofe,
To keepe the Queenes peace is more to his behoofe.
If any woman smyle or cast on hym an eye,
Up is he to the harde eares in love by and by,
And in all the hotte haste must she be hys wife,
Else farewell hys good days, and farewell hys life.
Excepte she on hym take some compassion.
Then chiefe of counsell, must be Matthew Merygreeke,
What if I for marriage to suche an one seeke?"

Matthew then describes how easy he finds it to flatter Ralph to the top of the bent, and with how much pleasure he performs the ceremony. Then Ralph himself appears, declaring that death may come when it will; he is weary of his life; not, as Matthew Merry-greek suggests, because he is in danger of debt to any man, or because he fears imprisonment, but because of love he makes his moan. He has become enamoured of the fair woman who supped with them yesternight, and who, he has discovered, dwelleth in the house where they now are. "What! Christian Custance?" Yes: and except he has her for his wife, he shall run mad; he is utterly dead unless he has his desire.

"*M. Merry.* Where be the bellowes that blew this fire?
R. Roister. I heare she is worthe a thousande pounde and more."

If she is a widow, he loves her better therefore; and if she hath made promise to another, he shall go without her, and he were his brother. Matthew has heard say, he is well advised, that she hath to Gawyn Goodlucke promised — to Gawyn Goodlucke, a merchant man; but Ralph says—

"I will have her myne owne selfe, I make God a vow;
For I tell thee, she is worthe a thousande pounde."

He is "sorie God made him so comely doubtlesse"—

"For that maketh me eche where so highly favoured,
And all women on me so enamoured."

Thereupon Matthew begins to make delightful fun of Ralph's consummate self-conceit, and assures him that he has heard the ladies mistaking him for Lancelot of the Lakes, for Guy of Warwick, for Hector of Troy, for Goliath, Sampson, Colbrand,* Alexander, and for Charlemagne!—

* A celebrated Cornish giant.

"Sir, I pray you, what lorde or great gentleman is this?
Maister Ralph Roister Doister, dame, say I, ywis.
O Lorde (sayeth she then) what a goodly man it is,
Woulde Christ I had such a husbande as he is . . .
Such is your beauty, and such are your acts,
Such is your personage, and such are your facts,
That women, fair and foul, more and less,
They eye you, they love you, they talk of you doubtless."

Ralph, on his part, assures Matthew that he knows him most thoroughly, and promises him a new coat as a reward for his appreciative penetration. He is sure Dame Custance loveth him, but she dare not speak; and, in the meantime, Matthew will go home and call the musicians—

"For, in this your case,
It would set you forth, and all your wooing grace."

In the third scene we are introduced to Madge Mumblecrust * spinning on the distaff, Tibet Talkapace sewing, and Annot Alyface knitting; with all of whom Ralph, intent upon his suit with Christian, endeavours to curry favour with a view to gaining their assistance. He is particularly attentive to the lady's nurse, Madge Mumblecrust, whom he bids ask her to sue him in marriage, for surely for her sake she shall speed. He will be contented to take her at Madge's request and for Madge's sake; and then he is represented as telling her "a long tale in her eare." In the fourth scene he has brought Matthew Merrygreek to sound his praises, and he promises Madge a new set of gear if she will give Dame Custance the letter which he has written. He has no fear that it will not have the due effect upon her, because—he wrote it.

* This name was subsequently employed by Dekker in his "Satiromastix" (1602), and by Chettle in his "Pleasant Comedy of Patient Grissel" (1603).

"Then," says Merrygreek, "it needs no mending." "I warrant it well," says Ralph. "Here," says the stage direction, "they sing and go out singing;" but at present they are so far unsuccessful that, in the fifth scene, when Madge presents the letter to Christian, the lady refuses to open it.

The second act opens with the complaint of Dobinet Doughtie that Ralph, her master, sends her too many messages, and that if his wooing does not stop soon—

"Two pair of shoes a day will now be too little."

She has been entrusted with a ring and "a token in a clout" for Dame Christian Custance, and meeting Truepenie and Tibet Talkapace and Annot Alyface, she persuades them to undertake her errand for her. This they do, and are rewarded by such a severe scolding at the hands of their mistress, as causes them to vow vengeance against the unhappy lover. Then Matthew Merrygreek comes to call on Christian, and she declares that no one hath her faith and troth but one, and that is Gawyn Goodlucke, and if Matthew has not come from him, he may return immediately whence he came. He, on his part, does not pretend to be a friend of Ralph's, and the two agree that Matthew shall concoct an answer to him to which Dame Christian will assent, whatever it be, so long as it be as insulting as he can devise. Thereupon Matthew goes to Ralph, and gives him an exaggerated version of the lady's reply, contriving to insinuate his own real opinion under cover of Dame Christian's shield. He declares she called him

"The veriest dolte that ever was borne,
And veriest lubber, sloven and beast,
Living in this worlde from the west to the east."

Ralph says he will go home and die; and there ensues a most amusing colloquy between him and Matthew, who affects to take him at his word. "Then shall I bidde tolle the bell?" "No." "Will ye drinke once ere ye goe?" "No, no, I will none." "How feele your soule to God?" "I am nigh gone." "And shall we hence streight?" "Yea." "*Placebo dilexi*," says Matthew; "Maister Doister Roister will streight go home and die."

"*R. Royster.* Heigh how, alas, the pangs of death my hearte do breake.
M. Mery. Holde your peace for shame, sir; a dead man may not speake.
Nequando: what mourners and what torches shall we have?
R. Royster. None.
M. Mery. *Dirige.* He will go darklyng to his grave,
Neque lux, neque crux, neque mourners, *neque* clinke.
He will steale to heaven, unknowing to God I thinke.
A porta inferi, who shall your goodes possesse?
R. Royster. Thou shalt be my sectour, and have all more and lesse.
M. Mery. *Requiem æternam.* Now God reward your mastership,
And I will crie halfepenie doale for your worshyp."

Matthew carries the farce a little farther, pretending that Ralph is on the point of death, and that some portion of the funeral service may be gone through. But eventually he suggests to Ralph that he may as well try the effect of a personal interview with the dame, and Ralph consents; only "how may he revive being nowe so farre past?" Matthew will rub his temples, and set him up again at last. Ralph thinks it will not be possible, but Matthew is sure he can do it for twenty pounds. So the bargain is made. Ralph is to revive again for an hour or two, put on his boldest countenance, and encounter the dame face to face. He does so, and of course meets with an ignominious rebuff, the lady complaining that he has written her

an insulting letter, which turns out to be the very passage quoted by Wilson in his "Rule of Reason," as a specimen of unfortunate ambiguity! Certainly, the ambiguity is unfortunate. The letter runs thus :—

"Sweete mistresse where as I love you nothing at all,
Regarding your substance and richesse chiefe of all,
To your personage, beauty, demeanour and wit,
I commende me unto you never a whit.
Sorie to heare report of your good welfare,
For (as I heare say) suche your conditions are,
That ye be worthie favour of no living man,
To be abhorred of every honest man,
To be taken for a woman enclined to vice,
Nothing at all to Vertue gyving her due price,
Wherefore concerning mariage, ye are thought
Suche a fine Paragon, as nere honest man bought,
And nowe by these presentes I do you advertise
That I am minded to marrie you in no wise.
For your goodes and substance, I coulde bee content
To take you as you are. If ye mynde to bee my wyfe,
Ye shall be assured for the tyme of my life,
I will keepe ye ryght well, from good rayment and fare,
Ye shall not be kepte but in sorowe and care.
Ye shall in no wyse lyve at your owne libertie,
Doe and say what ye list, ye shall never please me.
But when ye are mery, I will be all sadde,
When ye seeke your heartes ease, I will be unkinde,
At no tyme in me shall ye much gentlenesse finde.
But all things contrary to your will and minde,
Shall be done : otherwise I wyll not be behinde
To speake."

And so on, the meaning being susceptible of quite another interpretation, if the punctuation is properly arranged.

Ralph, of course, declares he has nothing to do with it. To be sure "he wrote it," but he did not compose it. That was done by a certain scrivener to whom he at once repairs, and whom he tries to bully, but who quickly puts him right upon the matter. Ralph then determines to return to Christian and explain the letter; but meanwhile Sym Suresby, the

servant of Gawyn Goodlucke, appears upon the scene, and is scandalized to hear it said that Dame Custance has a new lover in the person of Ralph Roister Doister. She offers to send a token to Gawyn, but Sym Suresby will have "no tokens this time, gramercies," and goes out, leaving the dame enflamed with anger against the coxcomb who has brought her to this unhappy pass. *She* marry Doister? She had rather match herself with a beggar than marry such a doltish lout! "Then a straw for her," says Ralph, "and a straw for her again"—

> "She shall not be my wife, woulde she never so faine;
> No, and though she should be at ten thousand pounde cost."

Matthew Merrygreek, doubtless with a sly twinkle in his eye, bids the dame behold what a husband she has lost. Christian then sends for Tristram Trusty, and she and her maids resolve that if Ralph makes his appearance again they will give him a warmer reception than he ever experienced. In the meantime, Trusty endeavours to console her. Merrygreek joins them, and assures the dame that he only takes part in Ralph's efforts at courtship for his own amusement. He arranges to bring Ralph into her presence once more, and then, whilst affecting to fight for him, he will really fight against him. The *mêlée* which follows is really capitally described, and is amusing even to the modern reader. All Merrygreek's blows descend, by a curious accident, upon Ralph's devoted head, and what with this and the valour of the Amazonian combatants, the poor fop is completely beaten. All that is wanting, then, to the finishing of the piece is the reconciliation of the dame with Gawyn Good-

lucke, and this is effected in the easiest and most obvious manner, Ralph being finally pardoned and permitted to take part in the general merrymaking.

On the whole the comedy exhibits more real genius than the tragedy which I have just described, and affords a lively picture of the manners of the time in which the scene is laid. Matthew Merrygreek, especially, is a remarkably well-conceived character; and if Ralph Roister Doister is a little *too* stupid and conceited to be altogether natural, he certainly yields us a considerable amount of entertainment. The few songs with which the play is favoured are by no means despicable as early efforts in a peculiar and difficult style; and the following has even a certain amount of rude, native vigour about it:—

"I mun be maried a Sunday,
I mun be maried a Sunday,
Whosoever shall come that way,
I mun be maried a Sunday.

"Royster Doyster is my name,
Royster Doyster is my name,
A lustie brute I am the same,
I mun be maried a Sunday.

"Christian Custance have I founde,
Christian Custance have I founde,
A wydowe worthe a thousande pounde,
I mun be maried a Sunday.

"Custance is as sweete as honey,
Custance is as sweete as honey,
I hir lamb and she my coney,
I mun be maried a Sunday.

"When we shall make our weddyng feast,
When we shall make our weddyng feast,
There shall be cheere for man and beast,
I mun be maried a Sunday."

ASCHAM'S "SCHOOLMASTER."

ASCHAM is another of those distinguished men whose works it is impossible to understand without a preliminary acquaintance with at least some of the facts of their life. A man of genius has always some particular reason for adventuring upon a certain work; he does not take a subject by haphazard, but is moved to it generally by circumstances over which he has no control, invariably by circumstances which require to be made known to the reader before he can thoroughly comprehend and enjoy the work in question. Thus it is obvious Ascham would not have written his "Toxophilus, or The Schole of Shootinge," but for his boyish training in the art of archery, and he would not have written "The Schoolmaster" if the exigencies of his profession had not convinced him that the mode of education common in his time was not the best that it was possible to devise. It is only too clear that the literary outcome of a man is inevitably affected by the most minute incidents of his career, and I therefore make no apology for summarising, as briefly as possible, some of the most important points in the life of Ascham.

He was born in 1515 at Kirby Wiske, a village near North Allerton, in Yorkshire, and was the son of John Ascham, a house-steward in the family of Lord Scroop, and Margaret, a lady of good family, whose maiden name, however, is not recorded. He passed his earlier years under the roof and care of his parents, until, at a still very youthful age, he was adopted into the family of Sir Humphrey Wingfield, who placed him, with his own sons, under the instruction of a tutor of the name of Bond. He seems, even at that time, to have evinced an unusual fondness for his mother-tongue, which is not surprising in one who was eventually to become one of the ablest of our early prose-writers; and one of his biographers * informs us that he showed considerable eagerness in reading English books, in preference to the Latin manuals which were then so prevalent. He was certainly extremely fortunate in his worthy patron, and, what is more surprising, he ever entertained a lively gratitude towards him for his enlightened patronage. Towards the end of "Toxophilus," he says, "This communication of teaching youthe, maketh me to remembre the right worshipfull and my singuler good mayster, Sir Humphrey Wingfelde, to whom nexte God, I oughte to refer for his manifolde benefites bestowed on me, the poore talent of learnyng, whiche God hath lent me: and for his sake do I owe my service to all other of the name and noble house of the Wyngfeldes, bothe in woord and dede. Thys worshypfull man hath ever loved and used, to have many children brought up in learnynge in his house amonges whome I my selfe was one. For whom at

* Grant: "De Vitâ et Obitu Rogeri Aschami."

terme tymes he woulde brynge downe from London both bowe and shaftes. And when they shuld playe he woulde go with them him selfe into the fyelde, and se them shoote, and he that shot fayrest, shulde have the best bowe and shaftes, and he that shot ilfavouredlye, shoulde be mocked of his felowes, til he shot better." In this Sir Humphrey was only enforcing the spirit of that law (3 Henry VIII., c. 3) which required that all subjects under sixty, not lame, decrepid, or maimed, or having any other lawful impediment—the clergy, judges, &c., excepted—should, under a penalty of twelve pence per month, use shooting in the long bow. Parents were directed to provide every boy from seven to seventeen years with a bow and two arrows; after seventeen he was to provide himself with a bow and four arrows. Every bower, for every ewe bow he made, was to make "at the lest ij Bowes of Elme Wiche or other Wode of mean price," under penalty of imprisonment for eight days.

Here obviously, it was Sir Humphrey's special passion for the bow and its science which excited in the youthful Ascham a similar passion, and caused him, when he went to Cambridge in 1530, to be regarded with something like pity and astonishment by the scholars there. "His favourite amusement," says Dr. Johnson, "was archery, on which he spent, or, in the opinion of others, lost so much time, that those whom either his faults or virtues made his enemies, and perhaps some whose kindness wished him always worthily employed, did not scruple to censure his practice, as unsuitable to a man professing learning, and perhaps of bad example

in a place of education." * They could not, however, have been under any alarm lest Ascham's fondness for archery should interfere with his devotion to the learned languages. He had been placed at St. John's College, under Hugh Fitzherbert, through the liberality of his friend Sir Humphrey, and his university career amply justified the confidence reposed both in his talents and industry. Like Fox, he entered college at a time when "the last great revolution of the intellectual world was filling every academical mind with ardour and anxiety. The destruction of the Constantinopolitan Empire had driven the Greeks with their language into the interior parts of Europe. The art of printing had made the books easily attainable, and Greek now began to be taught in England. The doctrines of Luther had already filled all the nations of the Romish Communion with controversy and dissension." Like Fox, Ascham could not help becoming impregnated by the Protestant tenets, and, like Fox, he was compelled to entertain his new opinions in secret. To the eyes of men he was at first simply a young and rising student, whose proficiency in Greek was such that, whilst still a youth, he read lectures on the subject to others who were desirous to be taught; in this being much commended by Pember, an intimate friend of Fitzherbert, and a man of great consequence at that time, who assured him, in a letter of which Grant has preserved an extract, that he would gain more knowledge by explaining one of Æsop's fables to a boy, than by hearing one of Homer's poems explained by another.

* "Life of Ascham," in Johnson's Works, vol. ix. 1823.

He could not, however, long remain a Protéstant without detection, and, as in the case of Fox, once more there was some difficulty in obtaining the fellowship to which he became entitled in 1534, when he took his B.A. degree. "Being," he says, "a boy, new Bacheler of Arte, I chanced amonges my companions to speake against the Pope: which matter was than in every man's mouth, bycause Dr. Hames and Dr. Skeppe were cum from the Court, to debate the same matter, by preaching and disputation in the universitie. This happed the same tyme, when I stoode to be felow there: my taulke came to Dr. Medcalfe's* eare: I was called before him and the seniores: and after grevous rebukes and some punishment, open warning was given to all felowes, none to be so hardie as to give me his voice at the election. And yet for all those open threates, the good father himself privilie procured, that I should even then be chosen felow. But the election being done, he made continuance of great discontentation thereat. This good man's goodnes, and fatherlie discretion, used towardes me that one day, shall never out of my remembrance all the dayes of my life. And for the same cause, have I put it here, in this small record of learning.† For next God's providence, surely that day, was by that good father's meanes, *dies natalis*, to me, for the whole foundation of the poore learning I have, and of all the farderance that hetherto else where I have obtayned." This, of course, was written many years after the events which it describes, and it shows us that ingratitude at least was not one of Ascham's failings. He

* The Master of St. John's. † The "Scholemaster."

must, indeed, have been of an unusually lovable and modest nature, or he could never have obtained equal and invariable favour from the hands of such different monarchs as Henry VIII., Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth. In this he was so far like his contemporary Udall, and unlike his contemporary Fox, whose sturdy and aggressive Protestantism he does not appear to have shared. He was probably too cultivated a man, too absorbed in his literary and classical pursuits, to give much attention to the religious controversies that marked the times; and those who differed from him on points of doctrine doubtless agreed to overlook his shortcomings in this respect in consideration of his usefulness as a man of learning.

There was as yet no established lecturer on Greek at Cambridge; so the university appointed Ascham to read in the open schools, and paid him, we are told, out of the public purse an honorary stipend, such as was then reckoned sufficiently liberal. A lecture was afterwards founded by King Henry, and he then quitted the schools in favour of private teaching in his own college. He was not less eminent as a writer of Latin than as a teacher of Greek. All the public letters of the university were of his composition; and we shall see how, in the future, this further accomplishment was of service to him in considerably advancing his fortunes. Up to this time his severe application to study seems to have told upon his health, and, after his installation as M.A. in 1537, he went to visit his parents in Yorkshire, whom he had not seen for seven years. This was in 1540, and from that time till 1542 he remained at home, a sufferer

from quartan fever, his only consolation being occasional attendance at archery meetings, and a pension of forty shillings (about £40 of present money) from the Most Reverend Edward Lee, Archbishop of York, which ceased on the death of the Archbishop in 1544.

It was in the spring of the latter year, and at the age of twenty-eight, that Ascham began to write his "Toxophilus," which was duly published, with a dedication to the King, in 1545. "Parteleye provoked," he tells us,* "by the counsell of some gentlemen, partly moved by the love whiche I have alwayes borne toward shotyng, I have wrytten this lytle treatise, wherein if I have not satisfyed any man, I trust he wyll the rather be content with my doyng, bycause I am (I suppose) the firste whiche hath sayde any thynge in this matter (and fewe begynnynges be perfect, sayth wyse men), and also bycause yf I have sayed a misse, I am content that any man amende it, or yf I have sayd to lytle, any man that wyl to adde what hym pleaseth to it.

"My minde is," he continues, "in profitynge and pleasynge every man, to hurte or displease no man, intendyng none other purpose, but that youthe myght be styrred to labour, honest pastyme, and vertue, and as much as laye in me, plucked from ydlenes, unthriftie games, and vice: whiche thing I have laboured onlye in this booke, showynge howe fit shootyng is for all kyndes of men, howe honest a pastyme for the mynde, howe holsome an exercise for the bodye, not vile for great men to use, not costlye for poore men to susteyne, not lurking in holes and corners for ill men

* In the Preface "To all gentle men and women in Englande."

at theyr pleasure, to misuse it, but abiding in the open fight and face of the worlde, for good men if it fault by theyr wisdome to correct it.

"And here," he says, "I would desire all gentlemen and yomen, to use this pastime in suche a mean, that the outragiousness of great gamyng shuld not hurte the honestie of shootyng, which of his owne nature is always joyned with honestie: yet for mennes faultes oftentymes blamed unworthely, as all good thynges have been, and evermore shall be.

"If any man woulde blame me, eyther for takynge such a matter in hande, or else for writing it in Englyshe tongue, this answere I may make hym, that whan the beste of the realme thinke it honest for them to use, I one of the meanest sorte, ought not to suppose it vile for me to write. And though to have written it in any other tonge, had bene bothe more profitable for my study, and also more honest for my name, yet I can thinke my labour wel bestowed, yf with a little hynderaunce of my profyt and name, maye come any fourtheraunce, to the pleasure or commoditie, of the gentlemen and yeomen of Englande, for whose sake I tooke this matter in hande. As for ye Latin or Greek tonge, everything is so excellently done in them that none can do better. In the Englysh tonge contrary, every thinge in a maner so meanly, bothe for the matter and handelynge, that no man can do worse." This, to be sure, seems a strange thing for a man to say who lived to see the Book of Common Prayer composed and published; yet it must be remembered that, up to the time of Ascham, the only English prose writers of any eminence whatever

had been Lord Berners* and Sir Thomas More; and for an English author to write any considerable work in his own native tongue was to perform a very unusual and unpopular task.

At the same time, it is curious that the new-born love of English should have come from those who were accounted most learned in, and therefore presumably most prejudiced in favour of, the classic languages. Sir John Cheke, who had been Ascham's tutor,† and was at all times highly respected by him, had written, in 1537, "I am of opinion that our own tung shold be written cleane and pure, unmixt and unmangled with borowing of other tunges, wherein if we take not heed bi tijm, ever borowing and never payeng, she shall be fain to keep her house as bankrupt. For then doth our tung naturallie and praisablie utter her meaning, when she bouroweth no counterfeitness of other tunges to attire her self with all, but useth plainlie her own with such shift, as nature craft, experiens, and folowing of other excellent doth lead her unto, and if she want at ani tijm (as being impersight she must) yet let her borow with suche bashfulnes, that it mai appeer, that if either the mould of our own tong could serve us to fascion a woord of our own, or if the old denisoned wordes could content and ease this neede we wold not boldly venture of unknown wordes."

"He," says Ascham, in his preface, "that wyll write well in any tongue, must folowe thys councel of

* The translator of Froissart's "Chronicle," and other works. See Wood's "Athenæ," Fuller's "Worthies," Walpole's "Royal and Noble Authors," and D'Israeli's "Curiosities of Literature."

† "Who taught Cambridge and King Edward Greek."—MILTON.

Aristotle, to speake as the common people do, to thinke as wise men do; and so shoulde every man understand hym, and the judgement of wyse men alowe hym. Many English writers have not done so, but using straunge wordes as Latin, French, and Italian, do make all thinges darke and harde. Ones I communed with a man whiche reasoned the Englyshe tongue to be enryched and encreased thereby, sayinge: Who wyll not prayse that feaste, where a man shall drinke at a diner, both wyne, ale and beere? Truly, quod I, they be all good, every one taken by hym selfe alone, but if you putte malvesye and sacke, read wyne and white, ale and beere, and al in one pot, you shall make a drynke, neyther easie to be knowen, nor yet holsom for the bodye." *

It should be stated that "The Schole of Shooting" is in two parts, and in the form of a conversation between two college fellows—Toxophilus, the lover of archery, and Philologus, the lover of learning—who discourse, beside the wheat-fields in the neighbourhood of Cambridge, throughout one long summer's afternoon, concerning the respective qualities of "The Booke and the Bowe." In the first part the author commends the use of the bow as a "most honest pastyme," "fit," not only "for princes and greate men," but "for scholers and students;" much "fitter for studentes than any musicke or instrumentes," and

* This, however, is a very one-sided view of the case. It is well not to admit into the language unsuitable or unnecessary words; but surely it is the glory of our English tongue that it does not disdain to add to its resources from every available quarter. Our language would not be—what it is—the richest and most expressive in the world, if it had not incorporated in itself a very large proportion of foreign words and phrases.

one in which no man can have too much practice. In peace it excludes all ignoble and unlawful games, such as cards and dice; and in war it gives a nation strength. Men should therefore excel in it, and make it a study. In the second part he goes into the details of shooting, and all through the work, "not only," says Mr. Arber,* "are the main arguments interwoven with a most earnest moral purpose, but they are enlivened by frequent and charming discursions, in the which he often lays down great principles, or illustrates them from the circumstances of his time." The work was duly presented to the King, at an audience vouchsafed to the author in the gallery at Greenwich Palace; and Ascham received as a reward a pension of £10, which was continued and increased by Edward VI., Mary, and Elizabeth, at their successive accessions.

After this, Ascham was so ill that he was unable to reside at Cambridge; but by-and-by he was well enough to accept the appointment of Public Orator to the University, vacated by the death of Sir John Cheke, and including the duty of conducting the correspondence of the academical body. He also became tutor to the young Prince of Wales, and was probably engaged in teaching writing, for which he was always famous, to many illustrious persons, such as Henry and Charles, Dukes of Suffolk, and the Princess Elizabeth. King Henry died in 1547, and with the accession of Prince Edward came the appointment of Ascham as tutor to the King's eldest sister. But he did not retain this long. He appears to have quarrelled

* "English Reprints:" *Toxophilus.*

with some of the Princess's servants, and left her, it is said, at the end of the second year, without asking her permission to do so; with the result that, when the lady eventually came to the throne, she did not show him so much favour as he might fairly have expected under different circumstances.

He was destined, however, to receive promotion in a different way. Whilst at home in the country he was informed that he had been appointed secretary to Sir Richard Monson, who was going out as ambassador to Charles V.; and on his way to town he had that famous interview with the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey, of which he has left so graphic an account in his "Scholemaster."* The embassy embarked in September, 1550, and reached Augsburg in the following month, from which time till July, 1553, he seems to have travelled over the greater part of Germany, and finally to have made a short excursion into Italy, the vices of whose people he severely reprobates in his most famous work. It was in the course of this visit to the Continent that he wrote (probably, it is thought, from Spires) his "Report and Discourse of the Affaires and State of Germany and the Emperour Charles his Court," which was published in London in 1553. The death of Edward then brought him back to England, and, though a Protestant, he found he had been appointed Latin secretary to Philip and Mary, with a salary of £20 a year.† This was in 1554. In the same year

* See *post*, p. 107.

† He obtained this appointment by favour of the very Bishop Gardiner who had been so bitter a persecutor of John Fox!

he threw up his fellowship at Cambridge, and married Margaret Howe, a young lady of good family, who afterwards gave his "Scholemaster" to the world. In the reign of Elizabeth he was presented with the prebend of Wetwang in York Cathedral, but otherwise he was not honoured with any special marks of favour, and his last years do not appear to have been particularly happy. His constitution had been enfeebled by constant attacks of ague; and by imprudently sitting up late at night to finish some verses which he intended to present to the Queen as a New-Year's gift, he contracted a dangerous malady, which eventually resulted in his death on December 30, 1568.

It is a curious fact that during his last moments he was attended by Dean Nowell, who preached his funeral sermon, and testified that he never saw or heard of a person of greater integrity of life, or one who was blessed by a more Christian dissolution. The Queen said she would rather have lost ten thousand pounds than have lost her old tutor, Ascham; and Buchanan did honour to his memory in the following epitaph:*—

"Aschamum extinctum patriae, Graiaeque Camoenae,
Et Latiae verâ cum pietate dolent,
Principibus vixit carus, jucundis amicis,
Re modicâ, in mores dicere fama nequit;"

which was thus translated by Archdeacon Wrangham:

"O'er Ascham, withering in his narrow urn,
The Muses—English, Grecian, Roman—mourn;
Though poor, to greatness dear, to friendship just;
No scandal's self can taint his hallowed dust."

It was not till the second year after Ascham's death,

* Cooper's "Athenæ Cantabrigiensis."

that his longest and most important work was printed under the auspices of his affectionate widow. The title-page read as follows:—"The Scholemaster; Or plaine and perfite way of teachyng children to understand, write, and speake, in Latin tong, but specially purposed for the private brynging up of youth in Jentlemen and Noble mens houses, and commodious also for all such, as have forgot the Latin tonge, and would by themselves, withoute a Scholemaster, in short tyme, and with small paines, recover a sufficient habilite, to understand, write, and speake Latin. By Roger Ascham. An. 1570. At London. Printed by John Daye, dwelling over Aldersgate."*

In the preface "to the honorable Sir William Cecill Knight, principall Secretarie to the Quenes most excellent Maiestie," Mrs. Ascham describes herself as a poor widow left with "a great sorte of orphanes," and "good comfort in the hope of his good continuance;" beseeching him to take on him the defence of the book, and to advance the good that may come of it by his allowance and furtherance to public use and benefit.

In the preface to the reader, Ascham himself gives an account of the origin of the work, which appears to have arisen out of a dinner given by Sir William Cecil on the 10th day of December, 1563. There were present on this occasion, beside the Secretary and our author, Sir William Peter, Sir J. Mason, D. Wotton, Sir Richard Sackville, Sir Walter Mildmay, M. Haddon, John Astley, Bernard Hampton, and

* Reprinted, with notes, by Upton, in 1711; by Mayor, in 1863; and by Arber, 1870. Also, in Ascham's "Works," by Bennet, in 1771; by Cochrane, in 1815; and by Giles, in 1864.

others; "of which number," says Ascham, "the most part were of hir Maiesties most honourable privie Counsell, and the reast serving hir in verie good place. I was glad than, and do rejoice yet to remember, that my chance was so happie, to be there that day, in the company of so manie wise and good men togither, as hardly could have been picked out againe, out of all England beside." They had not long sat at table, when the Secretary said he had had strange news brought to him that morning, to the effect that divers scholars of Eton had run away from the school for fear of beating. Whereupon he took occasion to express his wish that schoolmasters would use more discretion in their punishments than was usually the case. Many times, he said, they punished rather the weakness of nature than the fault of the scholar, and the consequence was that many scholars, who might otherwise have done well, were driven to hate learning before they knew what learning meant. Most of the other gentlemen who were present expressed a very similar opinion, and by-and-by, after Ascham had gone to read Greek with her Majesty, Sir Richard Sackville came up also, and finding Ascham in her Majesty's private chamber, took him aside to the window, and said that he would not, for a good deal of money, have been absent from that dinner. He had himself suffered from an unkind schoolmaster, and was so determined that his grandson should not suffer from the same indignities, that he begged Ascham would point out a schoolmaster who should teach young Sackville and the young Aschams also, and for all the rest he would provide, yea, though

they three cost him a couple of hundred pounds a year. He and Ascham then had farther talk together concerning the bringing up of children, and Sir Richard said he had heard Ascham say not long ago that he might thank Sir John Cheke for all the learning he had, and he knew very well, himself, that he did teach the Queen. And therefore seeing that God did so bless him as to make him the scholar of the best master, and also the schoolmaster of the best scholar, that ever were in those times, surely he would please God, benefit his country, and honest his own name, if he would take the pains to impart to others what he learned of such a master, and how he taught such a scholar. "I," says Ascham, "beginning some farther excuse, sodenlie was called to cum to the Queene. The night following I slept little, my head was so full of this our former taulke, and I so mindefull, somewhat to satisfie the honest request of so deare a frend. I thought to praepare some litle treatise for a New-Yeares gift that Christmas. But, as it chanced to busie builders, so in building thys my poor Schoole-house (the rather because the forme of it is somewhat newe, and differing from others), the worke rose dailie higher and wider, than I thought it would at the beginninge."

It appears to have been commenced in December, 1563, and to have been composed at intervals between that date and the death of Sir Richard Sackville, which happened in July, 1566. It was then thrown aside, "scattered and neglected," as the author tells us, "for almost two yeares. together," when it was at last completed, as we now possess it, under the

encouragement of Sir William Cecil, in the last few months of Ascham's life.

"If a guess might be hazarded," says Mr. Arber, "it would seem that the author had but gathered the materials together, up to Sir Richard Sackville's death, and that he wove them together in their present form, after he resumed the book. The allusion to the Queen's visit to Cambridge as '*late* being there,' would show that that part was written about 1565; while the phrase, 'Sir Rychard Sackville, that worthy Jentleman, *of worthie memorie*, as I said in the *begynnynge*,' would prove that at least 'The Praeface' and the Invective against Italianated Englishmen were written after the resumption of the book in 1568; and, consequently, that it was after then that the work was finally planned. The first book was then completed, and the second far proceeded with, when Death parted for ever the busy worker from his Book. This is also confirmed by Ascham's last letter to Sturm, which proves him to have been intent on the work just before his decease."

The first book of "The Scholemaster" treats of "the bringing up of youth;" the second, of "the ready way to the Latin tong."

In the first book, Ascham begins by explaining in detail the manner in which Latin should be taught, laying great stress upon the point that the scholar shall be taught "cheerfullie and plainlie," and strongly advising that he shall not be asked to speak the language upon common occasions. "For, as Cicero saith in like matter, *loquendo male loqui discunt.* And, that excellent learned man, G. Budæus, in his Greeke

Commentaries, forecomplaineth, that whan he began to learne the latin tonge, use of speaking latin at the table, and elsewhere, unadvisedlie, did bring him to such an evill choice of wordes, to soch a crooked framing of sentences, that no one thing did hurt or hinder him more, all the daies of his life afterward, both for redinesse in speaking, and also good judgment in writinge."

Ascham lays equal stress upon the necessity of being kind to children. "If," he says, "your scholer do misse sometimes in working rightly . . . . chide not hastelie, for that shall both dull his witte, and discourage his diligence: but monish him gentelie: which shall make him both willing to amende, and glad to go forward in love and hope of learning. . . . I do gladlie," he continues, "agree with all good scholemasters in these pointes: to have children brought to good perfitnes in learning: to all honestie in manners: to have all faultes rightlie amended: to have everie vice severelie corrected: but for the order and waie that leadeth rightlie to these pointes, we somewhat differ. For commonlie many scholemasters, some, as I have seen, mae, as I have heard tell, be of so crooked a nature, as, when they meete with a hardwitted scholer, they rather breake him than bowe him, rather marre him, than mend him. For whan the scholemaster is angrie with some other matter, then will he sonest faul to beate his scholer: and though he him selfe should be punished for his folie, yet must he beate some scholer for his pleasure, though there be no cause for him to do so, nor yet fault in the scholer to deserve so. These ye will say, be fond schole-

masters, and fewe be they, that be found to be soch. They be fonde indeede, but surelie over-many soch be found everie where. But this will I say, that even the wisest of your great beaters, do as oft punishe nature, as they do correcte faultes. Yea, many times, the better nature, is sore punished. For, if one, by quicknes of witte, take his lesson readelie, an other, by hardnes of witte, taketh it not so speedelie: the first is alwaies commended, the other is commonlie punished, whan a wise scholemaster should rather discretelie consider the right disposition of both their natures, and not so much wey what either of them is able to do now, as what either of them is likelie to do hereafter."

Ascham here enters into a long disquisition on the difference between hard wits and quick wits, and complains that scholars are sent to the university (as we know they *were* sent, in his time) at too young an age. There are, he says, "seven plaine notes to choise a good witte in a child for learninge," and these are the seven desiderated by Socrates in Plato's "Republic." *First*, Εὐφυὴς, or "he who is apte by goodnes of witte, and applicable by redines of will, to learning, having all other qualities of the minde and partes of the bodie,* that must an other day serve learning, not troubled, mangled, and halfed, but sound, whole, full, and hable to do their office." *Second*, Μνήμων, or "good of memorie, a speciall parte of the first note εὐφυὴς, and a mere benefite of

*"How," says Ascham, "can a cumlie bodie be better employed, than to serve the fairest exercise of Goddes greatest gifte, and that is learning?"

nature: yet it is so necessarie to learning." *Third*, Φιλομαθής, or "given to love learning; for though a childe have all the giftes of nature at wishe, and perfection of memorie at will, yet if he have not a speciall love to learning, he shall never attain to moch learning. *Fourth*, Φιλόπονος, or "he that hath a lust to laboor, and a will to take paines. For, if a childe have all the benefites of nature, with perfection of memorie, love, like, and praise learning never so moch, yet if he be not of him selfe painefull, he shall never attayne unto it." *Fifth*, Φιλήκοος, or "he that is glad to heare and learne of an other. For otherwise he shall sticke with great troble, where he might go easelie forwarde; and also catch hardlie a verie little by his owne toyle, when he might gather quicklie a good deale, by an other man's teaching." *Sixth*, Ζητητϊκὸς, or "he that is naturallie bold to aske any question, desirous to search out any doubte, not ashamed to learne of the meanest, not afraide to go to the greatest, until he be perfitelie taught, and fullie satisfiede." The *Seventh* and last point is Φιλέπαινος, or "he that loveth to be praised for well doing, at his father's, or master's hand. "A childe of this nature," says Ascham, "will earnestlie love learnyng, gladlie labor for learning, willingly learne of others, boldlie aske any doubte. And thus, by Socrates judgment, a good father, and a wise scholemaster, shold chose a childe to make a scholer of, that hath by nature, the foresayd the perfite qualities, and cumlie furniture, both of mynde and bodie, hath memorie, quick to receyve, sure to keape, and ready to deliver: hath love to learning: hath lust to labor: hath desire to learne of

others: hath boldnes to aske any question: hath minde holie bent, to wynne praise by well doing."

Having thus described his ideal of a perfect scholar, Ascham returns once more to advocate the law of kindness in the treatment of young learners. Against those who laugh at such a law, and say that they "never saw a good scholemaster do so, nor never red of wise man that thought so," he quotes the dictum of Socrates, Οὐδὲν μάθημα μετα δοολείας χρὴ μανθάνειν, οἱ μὲν γὰρ τοῦ σώματος πόνοι βιά πονούμενοι χεῖρον οὐδίν τὸ σῶμα ἀπερνάξονται; ψυχῇ δε, βίαιον οὐδὲν ἔμμονον μάθημα; in English, thus:—"No learning ought to be learned with bondage: For, bodelie labors, wrought by compulsion, hurt not the bodie: but any learning learned by compulsion, tarieth not long in the mynde: And why? For what soever the mynde doth learne unwillinglie with fear, the same it doth quicklie forget without care." Some will say, however, that children naturally love pastime and dislike learning, because the one is easy and pleasant and the other is hard and wearisome: which, says Ascham, is an opinion not so true as some men ween; for, if ever the nature of man be given at any time, more than another, to receive goodness, it is in the innocency of young years, before experience of evil has taken root. Children, he thinks, kept, as they are, in God's fear, and governed by His grace, may surely be most easily brought to serve well God and country both by virtue and wisdom.

"And one example," he says, "whether love or feare doth worke more in a child for vertue and learning, I will gladlie report: which maie be heard with

some pleasure, and folowed with more profit. Before I went into Germaine I came to Brodegate in Leicestershire, to take leave of that noble Ladie, Jane Grey, to whom I was exceeding moch beholdinge. Her parents, the duke and duches, with all the household, gentlemen and gentlewomen, were hunting in the parks: I founde her, in her chamber, reading 'Phædon Platonis' in Greeke, and that with as moch delite, as som ientlemen wold read a merie tale in 'Bocase.' After salutation, and dewtie done, with som other taulke, I asked her, whie she wold leefe soch pastime in the parke? Smiling, she answered me, I wisse, all this sporte in the parke is but a shadde to that pleasure, that I find in 'Plato.' Alas good folke, they never felt, what trewe pleasure ment. And how came you, madame, quoth I, to this deepe knowledge of pleasure, and what did chieflie allure you unto it, seinge, not many women, but verie fewe men have atteined thereunto? I will tell you, quoth she, and tell you a troth, which perchance ye will mervell at. One of the greatest benefites, that ever God gave me, is, that He sent me so sharpe and severe parentes, and so ientle a scholemaster. For when I am in presence either of father or mother, whether I speake, kepe silence, sit, stand, or go, eate, drinke, be merie or sad, be sowyng, plaiyng, dauncing, or doing aine thing els, I must do it, as it were, in soch weight, mesure, and number, even so perfitelie, as God made the world, or else I am so sharply taunted, so cruellie threatened, yea, presentlie some tymes, with punches, nippes, and bobbes, and other waies, which I will not name, for the honor I beare them, so without measure misordered,

that I think my selfe in hell, till tyme cum, that I must go to M. Elmer, who teacheth me so ientlie, so pleasantlie, with soch faire allurements to learning, that I thinke all the tyme nothing, while I am with him. And when I am called from him, I fall to weeping, because, what soever I do els, but learning, is ful of grief, trouble, feare, and whole misliking unto me. And thus, my booke, hath bene so moch my pleasure and more, that in respect of it, all other pleasures, in very deede, be but trifles and trouble unto me. I remember this talke gladly, both because it is so worthy of memorie, and because also, it was the last talke that ever I had, and the last tyme, that ever I saw that noble and worthie Ladie."

"I could be over long," he continues, "both in showing just causes, and in reciting true examples, why learning shold be taught, rather by love than feare." He that would read a perfect discourse of it should peruse that learned treatise which his friend Sturmius wrote—"De Institutione Principis"—to the Duke of Cleves. The godly counsels of Solomon and Jesus, son of Sirach, for sharp keeping in and bridling of youth, are meant, he thinks, rather for fatherly correction than for masterful beating, rather for manners than for learning, for other places than for schools. At the same time, God forbid that all evil touches, wantoness, lying, picking, sloth, will, stubborness, and disobedience, should be daily cut away with sharp chastisement. Among the Greeks and Romans, children were under the care of three separate persons, præceptor, pedagogo, parente; of whom the preceptor taught them learning with all gentleness, the peda-

gogue corrected their manners with much sharpness, and the father "held the stern" of all their obedience. But nowadays the schoolmaster is used both as a preceptor in learning and as a pedagogue in manners.

Ascham is quite willing that faults in life and manner shall be severely reprobated, and a large portion of his first book is devoted to a castigation of the young men of his time. He complains that whereas, in the olden time, the greatest respect was paid by youth to age, in his own time the young gentlemen of the Court did exactly as they pleased, and especially from seventeen to seven-and-twenty ("the most dangerous tyme of all a man's life, and most slipperie to stay well in") they had commonly "the reigne of all licens in their owne hand." The consequence was that the meaner men's children came to be the wisest counsellors and the greatest doers in the weighty affairs of the realm. Nobility, he remarks, without virtue and wisdom, is blood indeed, but blood truly without bones and sinews, and so of itself, without the other, very weak to bear the burden of such important matters; whereas, nobility, governed by learning and wisdom, is indeed most like a fair ship, having tide and wind at will, under the rule of a skilful master. Perhaps it is that the young men of the better class get into bad company, and so are led astray. Certainly error, and what he terms phantasy, do commonly occupy with them the place of truth and judgment. It is considered unmanly to blush, although Zenophon says of Cyrus that his bashfulness in youth was the very sign of his virtue and stoutness afterwards, and although Aristotle says that blushing in youth is

nothing else but the fear to do ill. Now, to dare to do any mischief, to condemn stoutly any goodness, to be busy in every matter, to be skilful in everything, to acknowledge no ignorance at all, is counted by some at Court the chief and greatest grace of all. For this the only remedy, he thinks, is in making good common laws for the whole realm, and also in observing private discipline every man carefully in his own house,—not so much in teaching youth what is good as in keeping them from what is ill. Innocence, he says, is the great thing to be desiderated in young people. He once more refers to the virtuous upbringing of the Grecian youths, and declares that the best of that which has been ever written has been written in the Grecian tongue. Learning, he says, teaches more in one year than experience in twenty, and learning teaches safely, whilst experience makes more miserable than wise. It is, in fact, what Ascham terms the schoolhouse of fools. Yet he does not mean that young gentlemen are always to be poring over a book. It is well known that he loves, and has always loved, all exercises and pastimes, and he would wish that all young gentlemen should join and excel in them.* Great men at Court, by their example, make or mar all other men, as well in religion as in manners; and therefore he wishes that two or three noble men would but begin to shoot, for then the whole Court, all London, the whole realm, would straightway exercise shooting.

* As, however, Ascham recommends the cockpit as a form of amusement, this is a particular in which his advice is scarcely to be followed.

After this comes that vigorous condemnation of the "Italianated" Englishman, which is one of the leading features of the work. Sir Richard Sackville had long ago asked him what he thought concerning the fancy that many young gentlemen had to travel abroad, and especially to lead a long life in Italy. And to this Ascham replied, that he took going thither, and living there, for a young gentleman that did not go under the keep and guard of such a man as both by wisdom can, and authority dare, rule him, to be marvellously dangerous. For Italy was not now as it was wont to be. Virtue once made that country mistress over all the world. Vice now made that country a slave to them that before were glad to serve it. Therefore, if wise men must needs send their sons into Italy, let them do it wisely, under the keep and guard of him who, by his wisdom and honesty, by his example and authority, may be able to keep them safe and sound, in the fear of God, in Christ's true religion, in good order and honesty of living. Otherwise they will run headlong into over-many jeopardies, as Ulysses had done many times if Pallas had not always governed him. Ascham himself knew divers that went out of England, men of innocent life, men of excellent learning, who returned out of Italy not only with worse manners, but also with less learning; neither so willing to live orderly, nor yet so able to speak learnedly as they were at home, before they went abroad. And it was so with every one. The Italianated Englishman brought back with him, for religion, papistry or worse; for learning, less commonly than they carried out with them; for policy, a factious heart, a discoursing head, a

mind to meddle in all men's matters; for experience, plenty of new mischiefs never known in England before; for manners, variety of vanities and change of filthy living. These be the enchantments of Circe, brought out of Italy to mar men's manners in England; much by example of ill life, but more by precepts of fond books, of late translated out of Italian into English, sold in every shop in London, commended by honest titles, the sooner to corrupt honest manners; dedicated over-boldly to virtuous and honourable personages, the easier to beguile simple and innocent wits. It is a pity, says Ascham, that those which have authority and charge to allow and disallow books to be printed, be no more circumspect herein than they are. Ten sermons at Paul's Cross do not do so much for moving men to true doctrine, as one of those books do harm with inticing men to ill living. More Papists be made by your merry books of Italy than by your earnest books of Louvain:

We, who remember that some of the great glories of our literature are owing to the influence exercised by the Italian works of genius upon our men of letters, will be slow to sympathize with Ascham in his wholesale censure. But that the laxity of Italian manners had an evil effect upon the morals of young Englishmen in the days of Elizabeth, is only too true, and so sincere a Protestant as Ascham may be pardoned if he was betrayed into the use of language which at first appears to us a little harsh and uncalled for.

In the second book of the "Schoolmaster," which treats of "the ready way to the Latin tong," he has

few opportunities for the enforcement of his moral precepts. He opens with a continuation of his method of teaching that language, and then passes on to an enumeration of the six ways appointed by learned men for the learning of tongues and the increase of eloquence—namely, translation, paraphrase, metaphrase, epitome, imitation, and declamation. Next follow disquisitions on "the true differences of authors" and the purity of the Latin tongue, in the latter of which the author takes occasion to favour us with criticisms upon Plautus, Terence, Varro, Sallust, and Cæsar, which have little interest for the modern reader.

SIDNEY'S "ARCADIA."

"No man," writes Horace Walpole in his "Catalogue of Royal and Noble Authors,"* "seems to me so astonishing an object of temporary admiration as the celebrated friend of the Lord Brooke, the famous Sir Philip Sidney. The learned of Europe dedicated their works to him; the republic of Poland thought him at least worthy to be in the nomination for their crown. All the Muses of England wept his death. When we, at this distance of time, inquire what prodigious merits excited such admiration, what do we find? Great valour. But it was an age of heroes. In full of other talents, we have a tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastoral romance, which the patience of a young virgin in love cannot now wade through; and some absurd attempts to fetter English verse in Roman chains †—a proof that this applauded author understood little of the genius of his own language. The few of his letters extant are poor matters; one, to a steward of his

* Page 128, ed. 1796, under "Sir Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke." Walpole did not deign to accord a separate chapter to so undistinguished a personage as Sir Philip Sidney!

† Thus Pope:—

"And Sidney's verse halts ill on Roman feet."

father, an instance of unwarrantable violence. By far the best presumption of his abilities (to us who can judge only by what we see) is a pamphlet published amongst the 'Sidney Papers,' being an answer to the famous libel called 'Leicester's Commonwealth.' It defends his uncle with great spirit. What had been said in derogation to their blood seems to have touched Sir Philip most. He died with the rashness of a volunteer, after having lived to write with the *sans froid* [*sic*] and prolixity of Mademoiselle Scuderi."

No passage more damaging to Walpole's reputation as a man and a critic could possibly have been written. The clever dilettante of the eighteenth century was quite unable to understand the noble hero of the sixteenth century, and the result is painful even to those who are willing to recognise in the author of the "Castle of Otranto" a man of considerable literary tact and aptitude. It is true enough that we have few means of judging of the reality of Sidney's fame; we have nothing but the testimony of his contemporaries to assure us of his popularity as a friend, his brilliancy as a courtier, and his bravery as a soldier; but surely it is sufficient to say of Sidney that he was born *laudari a viris laudatis*, that he was considered a great man among the great, and that his death was the signal for universal lamentation among his afflicted countrymen. The finical little censor of Strawberry Hill is good enough to sneer at the manner in which Sidney met his fate; but the story of Sidney on the field of Zutphen is one which still lingers in the memory of Englishmen, and is one, moreover, which the world will not willingly let die. "Such was this young man," says

Mr. Friswell, "that even his Spanish enemies bewailed him; the peasant at Penshurst, the courtier with his Queen, the great Queen herself, the meanest soldier in the camp lamented him, and above two hundred authors wrote sad elegies on his death. Brought home to London, the streets were thronged; the lord mayor and aldermen, robed in purple, and on stately horses; the deputies from foreign states, came forth to follow his ashes; English men and women wept and sobbed aloud, and lamented for him as a brother, and as the most beloved and first true gentleman of Europe." There must have been *some* reason for all this enthusiasm; and the voice of Elizabethan England may be taken as more valuable, perhaps, than even the *ipse dixit* of a Horace Walpole or a William Hazlitt.

For Walpole is not the only one of the detractors of Sir Philip Sidney. The "Arcadia" was unable to satisfy the acute but acrid author of the "New Pygmalion," and Hazlitt devotes a portion of his "Lectures on the Age of Elizabeth" to a statement of his reasons for his dissatisfaction. "Sir Philip Sidney," he says, "is a writer for whom I cannot acquire a taste. As Mr. Burke said he could not love the French republic, so I may say that I cannot love 'The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia' with all my good-will to it . . . It is to me one of the greatest monuments of the abuse of intellectual power on record. It puts one in mind of the court dresses and preposterous fashions of the time, which are grown obsolete and disgusting. It is not romantic, but scholastic; not poetry, but casuistry; not nature, but art, and the worst sort of art, which thinks it can do better than nature. Of the number of fine

things that are constantly passing through the author's mind, there is hardly one that he has not contrived to spoil, and to spoil purposely and maliciously, in order to aggrandise our idea of himself. Out of five hundred folio pages, there are hardly, I conceive, half-a-dozen sentences expressed simply and directly, with the sincere desire to convey the image implied, and without a systematic interpolation of the wit, learning, ingenuity, wisdom, and everlasting impertinence of the writer, so as to disguise the object, instead of displaying it in its true colours and real proportions . . . Imagine a writer to have great natural talents, great powers of memory and invention, an eye for nature, a knowledge of the passions, much learning and equal industry; but that he is so full of a consciousness of all this, and so determined to make the reader conscious of it at every step, that he becomes a complete intellectual coxcomb, or nearly so;—that he never lets a casual observation pass without perplexing it with an endless running commentary, that he never states a feeling without so many *circumambages*, without so many interlineations and parenthetical remarks on all that can be said for it, and anticipations of all that can be said against it, and that he never mentions a fact without giving so many circumstances and conjuring up so many things that it is like or not like, that you lose the main clue of the story in its infinite ramifications and intersections;—and we may form some faint idea of the 'Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia,' which is spun with great labour out of the author's brains, and hangs like a huge cobweb over the face of nature! . . . . In a word," says Hazlitt, "(and not to speak

it profanely) the 'Arcadia' is a riddle, a rebus, an acrostic in folio: it contains about four thousand far-fetched similes, and six thousand impracticable dilemmas, about ten thousand reasons for doing nothing at all, and as many more against it; numberless alliterations, puns, questions, and commands, and other figures of rhetoric; about a score good passages, that one may turn to with pleasure, and the most involved, irksome, unprogressive, and heteroclite subject that ever was chosen to exercise the pen or patience of man. It no longer adorns the toilette or lies upon the pillow of maids of honour and peeresses in their own right (the Pamelas and Philocleas of a later age), but remains upon the shelves of the libraries of the curious in long works and great names, a monument to show that the author was one of the ablest men and worst writers of the age of Elizabeth."

All this, of course, is very clever and well-written, and portions of it, doubtless, have a substratum of substantial fact. But it would be unfair to judge of the "Arcadia" as a whole from the peculiar point of view of William Hazlitt.* I am unable to believe that Sidney set to work "purposely and maliciously" to spoil all his fine things, "in order to aggrandise our idea of himself." I cannot see any trace of the "intellectual coxcomb," or observe that there is anything in Sidney's style so terribly tortuous and affected as Hazlitt describes it. He admits that there are some

* "The decisions of the author of 'Table Talk,'" says Lamb, "are more safely to be relied upon, on subjects and authors he has a partiality for, than on such as he has conceived an accidental prejudice against." And that he had conceived such a prejudice against Sir Philip Sidney is sufficiently obvious throughout his criticism.

fine passages in it; and for the rest, it is sufficient to turn to the testimony of more generous writers. We find Gabriel Harvey saying, "Live ever, sweete, sweete booke. The simple image of his gentle witt, and the golden pillar of his noble carriage, ever notify unto the world that the writer was the secretary of eloquence, the breath of the Muses, the honey-bee of the daintiest flowers of witt and arte, the pith of morale and intellectual virtues, the arme of Bellona in the field, the tongue of Suada in the chamber, the spirite of Practice in *esse*, and the paragon of excellency in print."* Heylin, the author of a "Description of Arcadia in Greece," praises the "excellent language, rare contrivances, and delectable stories" of Sidney's work, and says it has "in it all the strains of poesy, comprehendeth the universal art of speaking, and, to them who can discern and will observe, affordeth notable rules for demeanour, both public and private." "There are passages in this work," says Zouch,† "exquisitely beautiful,—useful observations on life and manners, a variety and accurate discrimination of character, fine sentiments expressed in strong and adequate terms, animated descriptions, equal to any that occur in the ancient or modern poets, sage lessons of morality, and judicious reflections on government and policy." Hakewell thought the "Arcadia" "nothing inferior to the choicest piece among the ancients," and Dr. Drake was of opinion that no other prose fictions contained so much apophthegmatic wisdom.‡ Hallam is, as usual, cold and measured in his criticism,

* "Bibliotheca Heberiana," Part I. † "Life of Sidney."
‡ "Shakespeare, his Times."

but his conclusions are generally favourable to Sir Philip Sidney. He considers the "Arcadia" more free from pedantry than most books of the age in which it was written, and does not think it more tiresome and uninteresting than the generality of "that class of long romances, proverbially among the most tiresome of all books." In a less fastidious age than ours "it was read, no doubt, even as a story, with some delight. It displays a superior mind, rather complying with a temporary taste than affected by it, and many pleasing passages occur, especially in the tender and innocent loves of Pyrocles and Philoclea."* Fuller has a genial passage in its praise; Cowper spoke of Sidney as a "warbler of poetic prose;" and Charles Lamb was of opinion that "the noble images, passions, sentiments, and poetical delicacies of character scattered all over the 'Arcadia' justify the character which his contemporaries have left us of that writer." †

Much of this, of course, is as exaggerated in the one direction as the diatribes of Walpole and Hazlitt in the other. "It would be mere pretence to say that the romance could be read through now by any one not absolutely Sidney-smitten in his tastes, or that, compared with the books which we do read through, it is not intolerably languid." The tens of thousands to whom Miss Braddon and Mrs. Henry Wood appeal so successfully would turn with horror from the comparatively dull pages of "Arcadia;" and, to even the most cultivated literary taste, I suppose it is somewhat of a task, as well as of a pleasure, to read

* "Introduction to the Literature of Europe."
† "Sonnets of Sir Philip Sidney," in Lamb's "Prose Works."

through much of Sidney at a sitting. "No competent person, however, can read any considerable portion of it without finding it full of fine enthusiasm and courtesy, of high sentiment, of the breath of a gentle and heroic spirit. There are sweet descriptions in it, pictures of ideal love and friendship, dialogues of stately moral rhetoric. In the style there is a finish, an attention to artifice, a musical arrangement of cadence, and occasionally a richness of phrases, for which English prose at that time might have been grateful."*

One critic† has even suggested that "it was the 'Arcadia' which first taught to the contemporary writers that inimitable interweaving and contexture of words, that bold and unshackled use and application of them, that art of giving to language, appropriated to objects the most common and trivial, a kind of acquired and adventitious loftiness, and to diction in itself noble and elevated, a sort of superadded dignity, that power of ennobling the sentiments by the language, and the language by the sentiments, which so often excites our admiration in perusing the writers of the age of Elizabeth." I cannot, indeed—remembering Lord Berners, and Sir Thomas More, and Latimer, and Roger Ascham—agree with Hallam and with Mr. Stigant in calling Sidney "the first good prose writer, in any positive sense of the term;" but I should say that he was the first good writer of English prose who paid any attention to style *as* style, and that therefore the "Arcadia," in this, as in many other ways, as I shall

* Professor Masson, "English Novelists and their Styles."
† "Retrospective Review," vol. ii. p. 42.

presently indicate, was not without influence on the future of the English language.

It should always be remembered, in judging the great work of Sir Philip Sidney, that he thought very meanly of it himself, and that it was never intended for publication. Dedicating the book to his "dear lady and fair sister, the Countess of Pembroke," he says, "You desired me to do it, and your desire, to my heart, is an absolute commandment. Now it is done only for you, only to you. If you keep it to yourself, or to such friends who will weigh errors in the balance of good-will, I hope, for the father's sake, it will be pardoned, perchance made much of, though in itself it have deformities; for indeed, for severer eyes it is not, being but a trifle, and that triflingly handled." Aubrey tells us, that when he was composing the "Arcadia," Sidney "was wont to take his table-book out of his pocket, and write down his notions as they came into his head, as he was hunting on Sarum's pleasant plains." He himself informs us, in the same dedication, that it was "done in loose sheets of paper, most of it" at Wilton, in the Countess's presence, the rest in sheets being sent to her from Court as fast as they were done. "In sum, a young head, not so well stayed as I would it were, and shall be when God will, having many, many fancies begotten in it, if it had not been in some way delivered, would have grown a monster, and more sorry might I be that they came in than that they got out. But his chief safety shall be the not walking abroad, and his chief protection the bearing the livery of your name, which, if much good-will do not deceive me, is worthy to be a sanctuary

for a greater offender. Read it, then, at your idle times, and the follies your good judgment will find in it, blame not, but laugh at; and so, looking for no better stuff than that, as in a haberdasher's shop, glasses or feathers, you will continue to love the writer."

It was in 1580 that Sidney began the composition of his romance. In 1579 Lyly had published his "Euphues, or the Anatomy of Wit," a work which Sidney was certain to read, and from which he probably learned some of those peculiarities of style and diction which excited the disgust of Hazlitt. This, however, was the only English work to which, so far as we can tell, Sidney was indebted. "In his youth," says Mr. Fox Bourne, "he had read diligently the 'Ethiopic History of Heliodorus,' lately translated out of Greek by Thomas Underdown," and he afterwards commended the old novelist for "his sugared invention of that picture of love in 'Theagenes and Chariclea.'"* From him he learnt, no doubt, to infuse the heroic element into the story; its pastoral structure seems due to the recollection of Sannazzaro's Italian "Arcadia," first published at Milan in 1502,† from which Sidney may also possibly have taken the idea of sprinkling verse here and there among the prose of his narrative. The remaining source of his inspiration is said to have been the "Diana" of Jorge de Montemayor, the Spanish precursor of Cervantes, out of whose work he had already translated several fragments into verse, and by whose "laboured beauty of style" and "richness

* "The Defence of Poesie," ed. 1829, p. 72.
† Fox Bourne, "Memoir of Sidney," p. 324.

of imagination," he appears to have been decidedly impressed.

But because Sidney was to a certain extent inspired by the works I name, it must not be supposed that the "Arcadia" is not, upon the whole, so far original that it may truly be described as the undoubted "heir of his invention." To be sure, one of the incidents is taken bodily from the eleventh book of "Amadis de Gaul," and there are, probably, many other instances of a like "conveyance;" but men of genius, from Molière and Shakespeare downwards, have been accustomed to give as good as they take, and Sir Philip Sidney is no exception to the rule. The story of "Plangus" was afterwards the origin of Shirley's play of "Andromana, or the Merchant's Wife." That part of the pastoral where Pyrocles agrees to command the Helots, seems to have suggested those scenes in "The Two Gentleman of Verona" in which Valentine leagues himself with the robbers. An episode in the second book, where a king of Paphlagonia, whose eyes have been put out by his bastard son, is described as led by his rightful heir, whom he had cruelly used for the sake of his wicked brother, has furnished Shakespeare with the underplot concerning Gloster and his two sons in "King Lear." There are in the romance the same description of a bitter storm, and the same request of the father, that he might be led to the summit of a cliff, which occur in that pathetic tragedy.* More than this, the materials of Beaumont and Fletcher's "Cupid's Revenge" are taken from an episode in the "Arcadia," and it is probable that the incident of Pyrocles

* Dunlop, "History of Fiction," vol. iii. p. 177.

donning female attire and going out to seek his love Philoclea, had some share in producing the Violas, Julias, Bellarios, and Uranias in which our elder dramatists delighted.*

Certainly the "Arcadia" was an original work in the true sense of the term; a wonderfully original work if we consider the previous poverty of English literature in romantic fiction. It was as different as possible from the great majority of those heroic tales which had for so many centuries fired the imagination of Europe. "Now that the revival of learning and the Reformation had chased the shades and spectres wan of the dark ages from the minds of men, something more than endless stories of adventures, enchanted castles, infidel magicians, and monotonous combats with dragons, giants, and knights, was required. Something was wanted which, morally and intellectually, should correspond to the advancing phase of the European mind. Spenser allegorised the old fictions, and by putting into them more than met the ear, delighted and elevated the mind by the transformation. But Sidney rejecting," says Mr. Stigant, "most of the old machinery, and retaining somewhat of adventurous incident, carried along by a constant play of chivalrous feeling, animated by his own 'high erected thoughts, seated in a heart of courtesie,' introducing a delicacy of taste and sentiment that was quite new, constructed a tale the nature of which admitted of discourses on the affections, passions, and events of life, observations on human nature and the social and political relations of men, and all the

* "Cambridge Essays," 1858, p. 113.

deductions which a richly endowed and cultivated mind had drawn from actual experience."

Lord Brooke tells us that Sidney's purpose was "to limn out such exact pictures of every posture in the mind, that any man being forced in the straines of this life to pass through any straights or latitudes of good or ill fortune might, as in a glasse, see how to set a good countenance upon all the discountenances of adversity, and a stay upon the exorbitant smiling of chance." We are further informed by Ben Jonson that Sidney meant eventually to have transformed the "Arcadia" into an English romance, with King Arthur as its hero. We know that Milton cherished a very similar desire in reference to a projected epic, and we have seen how, in our own day, the greatest poet of our times has, in the "Idylls of the King," done what his two famous predecessors so narrowly escaped doing before him. Even now, the "Arcadia" is the epic, *par excellence*, of the reign of Elizabeth. It reflects the courtly and adventurous side of the English mind of that age, as "Hamlet" reflects its contemplative and retrospective side. The whole scenery of the story is said to have been taken from that of Hackness, a small place near Scarborough; and its men and women are, in their courage and delicacy, the men and women with whom Sidney came in contact day by day. Musidorus is, not impossibly, Sidney himself; his friend Pyrocles may be intended for the Lord Brooke (Fulke Greville), who was his *fidus Achates* through life, and his loving biographer after death. Philoclea was his accomplished sister; and Pamela was the daughter of the Earl of Essex—the Stella to whom he addresses all his

most passionate love strains. In the treacherous and ambitious Cecropia we have a portrait either of Catherine de Medici or of Mary Queen of Scots; in Euarchus, a likeness of the author's own father, Sir Henry Sidney, who was the worthy parent of a noble son. It is not pretended that they answer in every particular to their human prototypes; but every writer must describe mankind as he sees them around him, and if the men in the "Arcadia" are more than usually manly, and the women more than usually womanly, it is because the English nation in the sixteenth century was of a nobler stamp than any of the generations that have succeeded.

The "Arcadia" was first printed in 1590, four years after the decease of the author. This edition has the peculiarity of being divided into chapters, an arrangement not adopted in future imprints, which merely observed the division into books; and it has the further advantage of containing many poetical pieces which were afterwards rejected. The second edition appeared in 1593, "augmented and ended;" the third in 1598, "with sundry new additions of the author;" the fourth in 1605,* the fifth in 1613, the sixth in 1623, the seventh in 1624, with a supplement to the third book, by William Alexander, Earl of Stirling; the eighth in 1627, the ninth in 1629, with a sixth book contributed by Richard Beling; the tenth in 1633; the eleventh in 1638, with a second supplement to the third book by a certain James Johnstone. Nor were these supplements the only indignities

* See "A Brief Account of an Unique Edition of Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia," by J. O. Halliwell (1854).

to which the unfortunate work was subjected. The narrative was "continued" in 1607 by Gervase Markham,* and in 1651 by "a young gentlewoman," called Mrs. Weames; whilst the whole work was "modernised," in 1725, by Mrs. Manley. It is indeed surprising that under the unsparing editorship and other barbarities from which it suffered, the original "Arcadia" has not altogether disappeared from human ken. As it is, the only portions which can be said to have been left by Sidney in a finished form are the first two books and a portion of the third. The complete work, as it stands, is not, perhaps, adapted for general perusal at the present day, and the modern reader may well be satisfied with the well-executed abridgment published in 1869 by the author of "The Gentle Life." †

Unlike most great works of genius, the "Arcadia" was extremely popular on its first appearance. Everybody read it, from the high-born ladies of the Court to the city madams and the country lasses; and so widely was it appreciated that an old writer felt it necessary to warn the ladies of his time not to read Sir Philip Sidney's "Arcadia," but to turn to "the grounds of good housewifery," which they were in danger of neglecting. After that, it relapsed into comparative oblivion, so far as the nation at large was concerned; but it found audience fit, though few, in such men as Shakespeare, who borrowed from it the names of several of his creations (such as Leontes,

* "The English Arcadia, alluding his beginning from Sir Phil. Sydne's ending."

† Sampson Low & Co., with Introductory and Biographical Essay.

Antigonus, Cleomenes, Archidamus, and Mopsa), Waller, Cowley, Sir William Temple, Charles I., and the other celebrated writers whose testimonies I have already quoted.

The two heroes of the romance are Musidorus, Prince of Thessalia, and Pyrocles, Prince of Macedon, who had been reared together under the care of the widowed mother of the former. They

> "Grew together like two wanton vines,
> Curling their loves and souls in one another;
> They sprang together and they bore one fruit;
> One joy did make them smile, and one grief mourn."

"Almost before they could speak perfectly," we are told, "they began to receive conceits not unworthy of the best speakers, excellent devices being used to make even their sports profitable, images of battails and fortifications being then delivered to their memorie, which, after their stronger judgments might dispense, the delight of tales being converted to the knowledge of all the stories of all worthy princes, both to move them to do nobly, and teach them how to do nobly, the beauty of virtue still being set before their eyes, and that taught them with far more diligent care than grammatical rules; their bodies exercised in all abilities both of doing and suffering, and their minds acquainted by degrees with dangers, and, in sum, all bent to the making up of princely minds; no servile fear used towards them, nor any other violent restraint, but still as to princes. So that a habit of commanding was naturalised in them, and, therefore, the further from tyranny. Nature having done so much for them in nothing as it made them lords of truth, whereon all other goods are builded."

At length the time came when it was thought good that they should travel, and they were accordingly dismissed by their affectionate protector to make trial of their prowess in the army of Euarchus, the father of Pyrocles, who, having conquered Pannonia and Thrace, was now laying siege to Byzantium. They put to sea, the ocean receiving them with a smooth and smiling face, as "though Neptune had then learned falsely to smile on princes," and for a period the winds were favourable, and the ships kept close together "like a beautiful flock that could well obey their master's pipe." But by-and-by the sun rose veiled in clouds, and in the tempest which followed, the fleet was scattered, the vessel of the princes split to pieces on a rock. The two friends clinging to the same bit of spar, and the force of the waves causing one to loose his hold, they were thrown upon the coast of Phrygia, at different points, and at some distance from each other. One fell into the hands of the king of the country, and was about to be put to death, when the other came happily to his deliverance, and then the two began a series of miraculous adventures, through which we need not follow them, merely taking up the thread of the narration at that point where, sailing from the shore of Asia to Greece, they were assaulted on the seas by a treacherous crew which had been hired to murder them, and from whose clutches they escaped only to fall into equal peril from pirates, and eventually to get safely, though separately, to land.

Here the "Arcadia" opens. The first few pages make us acquainted with two shepherds of Arcadia who, having come down to the coast of Laconia, see

Musidorus struggling with the waves, and successfully bring him to the shore. His first inquiry is for his beloved companion, and when he finds he is not there, he gives way to uncontrollable grief, until, somewhat appeased by the conversation of his succourers, he consents to be conducted to the residence of Kalander, "a gentleman who for his hospitality is so much haunted that no news stir but came to his ears," and under whose roof Musidorus may recover his health, "without which," say the shepherds, "you cannot be able to make any diligent search for your friend." Thus the three "took their journey together through Laconia, Claius and Strephon by course carrying his chest for him, Musidorus only bearing in his countenance evident marks of a sorrowful mind supported with a weak body."

"The third day after, in the time that the morning did strew roses and violets in the heavenly floor against the coming of the sun, the nightingales, striving one with the other which could in most dainty variety recount their wrong-caused sorrow, made them put off their sleep; and, rising from under a tree, which that night had been their pavilion, they went on their journey, which by-and-by welcomed Musidorus' life with delightful prospects. There were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees; humble valleys whose bare estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; thickets which, being lined with the most pleasant shade, were witnessed so to, by the cheerful disposition of many well-tuned birds; each pasture stored with sheep, feeding with

sober security, while the pretty lambs, with bleating oratory, craved the dams' comfort; here a shepherd's boy piping, as though he should never be old: there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing: and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music. As for the houses of the country—for many houses came under their eye—they were all scattered, no two being one by the other, and yet not so far off as that it barred mutual succour; a show, as it were, of an accompanable solitariness, and of a civil wildness. . . . 'This country,' says Claius, 'where you now set your foot, is Arcadia, and even hard by is the house of Kalander, whither we lead you. This country being thus decked with peace, and the child of peace, good husbandry, these houses you see scattered are of men, as we two are, that live upon the commodity of their sheep, and therefore, in the division of the Arcadian estate, are termed shepherds, — a happy people, wanting little, because they desire not much.'"

They now reach the house of Kalander, which, as being evidently an ideal conception of Sidney's, may be described in his language. It was "built of fair and strong stone, not affecting so much any extraordinary kind of fineness as an honourable representing of a firm stateliness; the lights, doors, and stairs rather directed to the use of the guest than to the eye of the artificer, and yet as the one chiefly heeded, so the other not neglected; each place handsome without curiosity, and homely without loathsomeness; not so dainty as not to be trod on, nor yet slubbered up with good fellowship; all more lasting than beautiful, but

that the consideration of the exceeding lastingness made the eye believe it was exceeding beautiful; the servants, not so many in number as cleanly in apparel, and serviceable in behaviour, testifying in their countenances that their master took as well care to be served as of them that did serve." Musidorus does not, however, introduce himself under his real name. He calls himself Palladius, and refers to his absent friend as Daïphantus. Anyhow, Kalander is charmed to welcome so distinguished a stranger, and anon gets to love him almost as a father loves his son, finding in him "a mind of most excellent composition, a piercing wit, quite void of ostentation, high erected thoughts seated in a heart of courtesy, an eloquence as sweet in the uttering as slow to come to the uttering, a behaviour so noble as gave a majesty to adversity, and all in a man whose age could not be above one-and-twenty years." To him the good man tells how Basilius, the King of Arcadia, has, in consequence of a mysterious oracle vouchsafed from Delphos, surrendered the conduct of his kingdom to a deputy, and has buried himself, with his wife Gynecia, and his daughters Pamela and Philoclea, in the country, with no other society or servants than that of a clown called Dametas, his wife, and his daughter Mopsa. Of Pamela and Philoclea Kalander gives a description which might well have excited the curiosity of Musidorus. "For my part," he says, "when I marked them both, methought there was (if at least such perfections may receive the word of more) more sweetness in Philoclea, but more majesty in Pamela; methought love played in Philoclea's eyes and

threatened in Pamela's; methought Philoclea's beauty only persuaded, but so persuaded as all hearts must yield; Pamela's beauty used violence, and such violence as no heart could resist. And it seems that such proportion is between their minds: Philoclea so bashful, as though her excellencies had stolen into her before she was aware; so humble that she will put all pride out of countenance: in sum, such proceeding as will stir hope, but teach hope good manners;—Pamela, of high thoughts, who avoids not pride with not knowing her excellencies, but by making that one of her excellencies to be void of pride; her mother's wisdom, greatness, nobility, but (I can guess aught) with a more constant temper."

But Musidorus was too full of anxiety for Pyrocles to give much heed to women, however lovely and however good, and, as it happened, he was destined to meet him again very soon. News came that Clitophon, the son of Kalander, joining in the Lacedemonian war against the Helots, had been made prisoner, and Musidorus, seeing the distress of Kalander, and feeling that here was an opportunity of showing his gratitude, gathered an army of Arcadians, and marched on towards the town of Cardanuta, where Clitophon was captive. A long and bloody battle ensued, in the course of which Musidorus and the captain of the Helots, both of whom had been performing prodigies of valour, came into contact, and a brilliant personal encounter followed. Neither seemed able to overcome the other, until the latter warrior, "with a blow whose violence grew of fury, not of strength, or of strength proceeding from fury, struck Musidorus upon the side

of the head," so that "he reeled astonished, and withal the helmet fell off, he remained bareheaded." Whereupon, "his chief enemy, instead of pursuing that advantage, kneeled down, offering to deliver the pommel of his sword, in token of yielding, withal speaking aloud unto him, that he thought it more liberty to be his prisoner than any other's general. Palladius, standing upon himself, and misdoubting some craft, and the Helots that were next their captain wavering between looking for some stratagem, or fearing treason, 'What,' said the captain, 'hath Palladius forgotten the voice of Daïphantus?'"

Then he explained how it was that he became the unwilling leader of the Helots, who, at his request, consented to give up Clitophon to his father, and the two princes returned joyfully to the house of Kalander. Here, for a time, they lived in perfect happiness, recounting to one another all the adventures that had overtaken them—Musidorus repeating, among other things, the story of the king Basilius which had been told to him by their present host. A portrait of Philoclea was also shown to Pyrocles, and after that it was observed that he became suddenly enamoured of solitude, and that, despite the remonstrances of Musidorus, he gave himself up to the most melancholy meditations. Evidently Pyrocles was in love, and in love, too, with the beauteous lady of whom he had heard so much, and of whom he had seen the counterfeit presentment. So that when Musidorus returned one day from a stag hunt to which he had been invited, he found that Pyrocles had gone, leaving behind him a letter, in which he confessed that

he was the slave of passion, and beseeching his friend to go back to Thessalia, and think no more about him.

This, of course, Musidorus could not do; and, setting out in search of Pyrocles, at last he found him, habited as an Amazon and known only as a woman under the feigned name of Zelmane. In this disguise he had obtained admission to the country retreat of Basilius, where his first glance of Philoclea had confirmed the deep impression already made by her upon his heart. She, on her side, believing Pyrocles to be a female, regarded him with such tenderness as one maiden feels for another. Basilius, also believing him to be a female, loved him as passionately as he loved Philoclea, and the queen, Gynecia, whose keen observation had penetrated beneath his disguise, was equally disloyal to her marriage vows. Such was the condition of affairs when Musidorus discovered his friend, and was informed by him of the enterprise in which he was engaged. Musidorus was the less able to chide his companion for his love for Philoclea, because he himself had seen the other daughter of Basilius, and was as hopelessly smitten by her charms as Pyrocles by his sweetheart's beauty. The first endeavour was to obtain firm footing in the forbidden territory, and this was readily achieved by the arts of Pyrocles, who prevailed upon Basilius to take Musidorus into his service as a shepherd, while he himself was secured in his position by the passion which he had inspired in both king and queen. The next difficulty was to declare to the young princesses their personality and devotion, for Philoclea still looked upon Pyrocles as an Amazon, and Pamela still thought

of Musidorus, who was known as Dorus, merely as a shepherd in her father's employment.

In the meantime, we are introduced to another leading heroine in the person of Cecropia, the widow of the younger brother of Basilius, who, from the long period of celibacy which had preceded the marriage of that monarch, had come to consider the crown of Arcadia as the lawful property of her family, and her son Amphialus as the natural inheritor of it. Therefore, she now regarded Pamela and Philoclea with fiendish hatred, and, by her order, two wild beasts, a lion and a bear, were allowed to fall upon the princesses as they were walking in a wood; and but for the bravery of Musidorus and Pyrocles, who of course were on the spot at that particular moment, they would have fallen victims to Cecropia's evil scheme. As it was, this adventure only served to quicken in the two couples the incipient affection they felt for one another. Philoclea had come to the conclusion that Pyrocles was something more than he appeared to her, and the progress of her love is described by Sidney in some of his most delightful passages. "Zelmane," he says, "as much as Gynecia's jealousy would suffer, desired to be near Philoclea; Philoclea, as much as Gynecia's jealousy would suffer, desired to be near Zelmane. If Zelmane took her hand and softly strained it, she also (thinking the friendship ought to be mutual) would (with a sweet fastness) show she was loth to part from it. And if Zelmane sighed, she would sigh also; when Zelmane was sad, she deemed it wisdom, and therefore she would be sad too." Musidorus, on the other hand, though he gave Pamela the whole history of himself

and his friend, under the pretence of amusing her with a fictitious story, only succeeded in making her hide, under a cold demeanour, the warmer feeling which she concealed within her. Whereupon Musidorus feigned a liking for the ill-favoured Mopsa, until Pamela began to feel the pangs of the most poignant jealousy.

Meanwhile, Cecropia had been once more at work, and, by a well-laid stratagem, succeeded in obtaining possession of the persons of the two princesses and the pseudo-Zelmane. Amphialus, her son, was desperately in love with Philoclea, but Cecropia was not particular about the lady, so long as she obtained one of the two heiresses to the crown, and she used the most deceitful arts in order to achieve her purpose. It was to no purpose that Basilius raised an army against her, and besieged the castle in which his children were confined. The noblest knights joined combat with Amphialus, in order to effect the rescue of the two princesses; but they are one and all uniformly unsuccessful. Even the brave Argalus was mortally wounded, and his wife, Parthenia, who assumed the armour of a knight, and challenged the murderer of her husband, met with the same untoward fate. Musidorus entered the lists under the disguise of the Forsaken Knight, and though he fought with unexampled vigour, he and his enemy were carried off the field in such a strait that neither of them was able to claim the victory.

At last, Cecropia threatened to behead her captives unless Basilius raised the siege, and when he did so, endeavoured to coerce her victims by a still more abominable expedient. She resolved to play the tragedy of death before their eyes, and try whether its terrors would not

abate their constancy. She caused Philoclea to be the witness of an execution which, to all appearance, was that of her sister Pamela, and she caused Pamela to be the witness of a similar spectacle, of which Philoclea was supposed to be the central figure. But overcome by grief, as both of them undoubtedly were, they would not give way, and meanwhile their agony was such that Amphialus, who had been unaware of his mother's horrible plan, pursued her with his sword drawn, until she, terrified by the intensity of his rage and despair, and, flying before him, fell from a battlement of the castle, and expiated her long list of crimes by death.

Amphialus himself did not long survive his mother. Maddened by remorse and sorrow, he threw himself upon the point of his sword, and, being succoured in his latter hours by Queen Helen of Corinth, who had long and secretly loved him, disappears from the narrative, when, yielding to her solicitations, he allows himself to be carried off by her to her own country, there to be tended with the most anxious solicitude. The princesses, however, were far from being at the end of their troubles. Anaxsus and his two brothers, three knights who had come to assist Amphialus against Basilius, fell in love with Pamela, Philoclea, and the pseudo-Zelmane; and, their suit being rejected, endeavoured to obtain by force the happiness which they could not obtain by their own merits. But here again Zelmane stepped in to carry discomfiture into the ranks of his enemies, first slaying two of the brothers, and then coping with Anaxsus himself in a combat which is described by Sidney in his happiest terms, but the

conclusion of which is unknown to us, owing to a break in the original manuscript.

When the story is resumed by Sidney we find that the two princesses had returned safely to their father, that Pamela had agreed to fly with Musidorus to his kingdom of Thessaly, and that Pyrocles was to follow them, if Philoclea, who had been informed of his identity, would consent to accompany him. Accordingly Dametas and his family were got out of the way on some trivial excuse, and Musidorus escaped with Pamela to a forest, where, fatigued with her journey, she lay down to repose.

In the meantime Pyrocles, who, under the character of Zelmane, found it difficult to parry the advance of both Basilius and Gynecia, was driven at last to appoint a meeting with the latter; and he so arranged a similar meeting with the former that the king and queen met in the darkness of a certain cave, each under the impression that the other was Zelmane. Pyrocles himself hastened to the chamber of his Philoclea, and, having assured her of his ardent love, was distressed to find that the anguish she had suffered had rendered her utterly incapable of undertaking any journey. Still more unhappily, Dametas had become aware of the flight of Pamela; and, anxious to discover whether his other charge was safe, came to Philoclea's apartment only to find her reposing in the embrace of one whom, by his dress, he immediately recognised to be a man. The law of chastity was strictly enforced in the land of Arcadia, and when Dametas detailed to the crowd that had collected round the place the circumstances that had

come to his knowledge in the last few hours, their indignation was extreme. Philanax, a faithful servant of the king, rushed in with guards and secured the persons of the lovers, while Musidorus and Pamela had been captured by a stray body of insurgents, who now returned joyfully with their distinguished captives. More than this, Gynecia was presently found bewailing the fact that she had poisoned her husband with a certain draught (a love philtre) which she had intended for Pyrocles, and which Basilius, seeing, had desired, asked for, and duly swallowed. He had then fallen down in a settled stupor, from which it seemed impossible to rouse him.

Here, therefore, was a splendid opportunity for Philanax, who, though faithful to the king, did not see why, now that his majesty was dead, the queen guilty of murder, and the princesses discovered to have infringed the laws, he should not snatch for himself the throne of the country. Wherefore he imprisoned the whole company of the accused, including Musidorus and Pyrocles, and was threatening them with all manner of most dreadful punishments when news arrived that Euarchus, king of Macedon, had come on a visit to his old friend Basilius, and on learning his unhappy fate had asked permission to be present at his funeral. It occurred to Philanax that this was a good chance for shifting the odium of the death of his prisoners upon another's shoulders; and he requested Euarchus, on hearing a statement of the facts of the case, to give judgment as to the fate of the guilty persons. It must be understood that Musidorus and Pyrocles still elected to remain known as Palladius

and Daïphantus, names under which Euarchus could not possibly recognise them; and they themselves were kept perfectly ignorant of the state of affairs. Euarchus, on his part, having duly weighed the evidence on either side, had no hesitation in condemning Pyrocles to be thrown headlong from a high tower, and Musidorus to be beheaded—a sentence which he commanded to be carried out immediately.

Kaloludus, the servant of Musidorus, had, however, penetrated beneath the disguise of his master, and now divulged his identity as Prince of Thessalia, and that of Pyrocles as Prince of Macedon—the one being the nephew and the other the son of the judge who had just condemned them to a terrible death. One can imagine the struggle which ensued in the mind of Euarchus; but the judge triumphed over the father and the uncle, and he reiterated his command that the sentence should immediately be performed. At this striking juncture, what should happen but the sudden revivification of the king Basilius, who had slept off the effects of the potion, and was now as much alive as ever he was! He speedily resumed the control of his dominions; and, his love for Pyrocles having suffered a complete decay, he not only took Gynecia to his arms again, but married his two daughters to the objects of their affections, and the story ends in happiness being extended to all the *dramatis personæ*.

That the narrative cannot, in any sense, be termed unexciting, is obvious from the brief abstract I have been able to give. That some of the episodes are unnecessary, and that some of the descriptions are disagreeably spun out, may readily be conceded; but

when this is said there still remains much in the "Arcadia" to which the critic can accord the highest commendation. The heroes are of the most heroic character, the heroines possess every charm that womanhood can give them, the scenery is exquisitely delineated, the incidents are well designed, and throughout the story there breathes a spirit of calm and sweetness which is very delicious after the oppressive atmosphere of such modern romances as those of Ouida, and such modern novels as those of Balzac.

Moreover, there are scattered through the "Arcadia" some of the most successful of Sir Philip Sidney's poems. Take, for instance, these two little stanzas:—

"My true love hath my heart, and I have his,
By just exchange, one for the other given;
I hold his dear, and mine he cannot miss;
There never was a better bargain driven.
My true love hath my heart, and I have his.

"His heart in me keeps me and him in one:
My heart in him his thoughts and senses guides,
He loves my heart for once it was his own,
I cherish his because in me it bides.
My true love hath my heart, and I have his."

Take also, as a sample of his more serious style, this noble sonnet:—

"Since nature's works be good, and death doth serve
As nature's work, why should we fear to die?
Since fear is vain, but when it may preserve,
Why should we fear that which we cannot fly?
Fear is more pain than is the pain it fears,
Disarming human minds of native might;
While each conceit an ugly figure bears
Which were not ill, well viewed in reason's light.
Our owly eyes, which dimmed with passions be,
And scarce discern the dawn of coming day,
Let them be cleared, and now begin to see
Our life is but a step in dusty way.
Then let us hold the bliss of peaceful mind:
Since, feeling this, great loss we cannot find."

The "Arcadia" may at first sight, and to a modern reader, appear a very tedious production; but, if the student has the courage to persevere in its perusal, he cannot help being the better, eventually, for the noble thoughts and beautiful images with which that work is crowded.

OVERBURY'S "CHARACTERS."

"THE literature of Protestant England passed," it has been said, "about the time of James I., from the exuberant delicious fancifulness of youth into the sober deliberativeness of manhood. The age of romantic chivalry, of daring discovery, of surpassing danger, was passing away. A time of wonderful thoughtfulness, of strong research, of national quiet, had come. Learning had become common to most educated persons. The most recondite subjects on theology and among the schoolmen, the highest problems in nature, the subtlest inquiries into the human spirit, the first principles of human society, every theory of national government, daunted not, but fascinated thinkers. Selden owned, 'All confess there never was a more learned clergy; no man taxes them with ignorance;' and the writings of Bacon, Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Hales, Selden, Hobbes, Prynne, and others, represent the attainments of the laity. The thinkers," in their turn, "influenced the people. The words Precisian and Puritan, creations of this epoch, testify to the growing seriousness of the nation. In these earliest years of Puritanism especially, and

generally throughout the seventeenth century, there was a strong passion for analysis of human character. Men delighted in introspection. Essays and characters took the place of the romances of the former century."*

Of this new manifestation of the national mind, the first-fruits were probably the "Characters of Vertues and Vices," published by Bishop Hall in 1608; but more widely popular, and more worthy of the consideration of the modern reader, are the "Characters, or Witty Descriptions of the Properties of Sundry Persons," first published by Sir Thomas Overbury in 1614,† and followed in 1628 by the "Microcosmography" of Bishop Earle, to which I shall make some reference by-and-by.

Sir Thomas has, indeed, other claims than this upon the attention of posterity. His mysterious death, whether caused by the arts of the Countess of Essex or by the hatred of King James, is alone sufficient to cause him to be regarded with interest by historical students; and his other literary works are by no means unworthy of the fame he has acquired by the book of "Characters." His poem of "The Wife" was written to persuade his friend, the Earl of Somerset, not to marry the woman who, in revenge, is believed to have compassed his death, and whose character certainly was such as to justify the words he used against her. She had already been the mistress of Lord Somerset before divorced from Essex, and Overbury was quite right in saying that a marriage with her "would not only be hurtful

* Arber's reprints, "Earle's Microcosmography."

† Three impressions were issued in this year, the first containing twenty-one, the second twenty-five, and the third thirty "Characters."

to his preferment, but helpful to subvert and overthrow him." He besought his friend not to "cast all away upon a woman noted for her injury and immodesty," whom, at another time, he goes so far as to call a "strumpet." He was the more likely to know her real character, because he had been employed throughout the intrigue, and had written, I am grieved to say, many of the letters and love-poems which had gone far towards exciting the evil passions of the unhappy woman. In the poem itself there is no direct allusion to the Countess, but it is obvious that it was aimed against her. The poet treats first of marriage:—

"Mariage, to all whose joyes two parties be,
And doubled are by being parted so,
Wherein the very act is charity,
Whereby two soules into one body go,
Which makes two, one; while here they living be,
And after death in their posterity."

Then, of "the effect thereof; Children:"—

"We fill but part of time, and cannot dye,
Till we the world a fresh supply have lent.
Children are bodies sole eternity;
Nature is Gods, art is mans instrument.
Now all man's art but only dead things makes,
But herein man in things of life partakes."

"Then of his contrary, Lust; then for his choyce, first, his opinion negatively, what should not be: the first, causes in it, that is, neither Beauty, Birth, nor Portion"—

"And all the carnall beauty of my wife,
Is but skin-deep, but to two senses known;
Short even in pictures, shorter liv'd than life,
And yet the love survives, that's built thereon:
For our imagination is too high,
For bodies when they meet, to satisfie . . . .

"Birth, lesse than beauty, shall my reason blinde,
Her birth goes to my children, not to me:
Rather had I that active gentry finde,
Vertue, then passive from her ancestry;
Rather in her alive one vertue see,
Then all the rest dead in her pedigree . . . .

"As for (the oddes of sexes) portion,
Nor will I shun it, nor my aime it make;
Birth, beauty, wealth, are nothing worth alone,
All these I would for good additions take,
Not for good parts, those two are ill combin'd,
Whom, any third thing from themselves hath join'd.

"Rather than these the object of my love,
Let it be good; when these with vertue go,
They (in themselves indifferent) vertues prove,
For good (like fire) turns all things to be so.
Gods image in her soule, O let me place
My love upon! not Adam's in her face."

By "good" he would have "holy" understood, and, next to "good"—

"Give me an understanding wife,
By nature wise, not learned by much art,
Some knowledge on her side, will all my life
More scope of conversation impart:
Besidés her inborn vertue fortifie.
They are most firmly good, that best know why."

Sir Thomas is by no means an advocate for advanced education among women, and would be exceedingly unpopular among the ladies of the present day, who are so voluble in their support of what they call their claims:—

"Domesticke charge doth best that sex befit,
Contiguous businesse; so to fixe the mind,
That leisure space for fancies not admit:
Theyr leysure 'tis corrupteth woman-kind:
Else, being plac'd from many vices free,
They had to heav'n a shorter cut than we . . . .

"As good, and knowing, let her be discreete,
That, to the others weight, doth fashion bring;
Discretion doth consider what is fit,
Goodness, but what is lawfull; but the thing,
Not circumstances; learning is and wit,
In men, but curious folly without it . . . .

"Womans behaviour is a surer barre
Then is their no; that fairly doth deny
Without denying; thereby kept they are
Safe e'en from hope; in part to blame is she,
Which hath without consent bin only tride;
He comes too neere, that comes to be denide."

Here the allusion is obviously to the indiscretion (to use a scarcely adequate term) of the Countess of Essex, who was as far as possible from realising the conception of a helpmeet which Overbury endeavours to put forward.* In his other poem, "Of the Choyce of a Wife," the description is more general, and, in truth, more pleasing in expression than in the larger piece. Otherwise it is very similar in tone. In choosing his wife, he says, he would trust the eye of no man—

"For in way of love and glory,
Each tongue best tells his own story."

To make his choice the bolder, he would have her child to such

"Whose free vertuous lives are older
Than antiquity can touch;"

yet he concedes that an ancient stock may bring branches of worth—

"Like rich mantles shadowing
Those descents that brought them forth.

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* Le Neve, in his "Cursory Remarks on Some of the Ancient English Poets," remarks, in reference to this poem, that "the sentiments, maxims, and observations with which it abounds, are such as a considerable experience and a correct judgment of mankind alone can furnish. The topics of jealousy, and of the credit and behaviour of women, are treated with great truth, delicacy, and perspicuity. The nice distinctions of moral character, and the pattern of female excellence here drawn, contrasted as they were with the heinous and flagrant enormities of the Countess of Essex, rendered this poem extremely popular when its ingenious author was no more."

"Therefore to prevent such care
That repentance soone may bring,
Like marchants, I would choose my ware,
Use-full good, not glittering.
He that weds for state or face,
Buys a horse, to lose a race."*

I shall not linger, however, over Overbury's poetical productions, because, interesting as they are from the circumstances under which they were written, they contain nothing, after all, but the most common-place sentiments, clothed in decidedly crabbed and eccentric verse. Such beauties as they have, are, as Campbell says, "those of solid reflection, predominating over, but not extinguishing, sensibility."† Certainly they include little that is of permanent value. The "Remedy of Love,"‡ a paraphrase of the famous poem by Ovid, is perhaps the most successful of Overbury's efforts in this branch of literature; but the nature of the subject prevents me from giving any examples of his mode of treatment, and I pass on to notice his "Observations in his Travailes upon the State of the XVII Provinces as they stood Anno Dom. 1609," which appeared in 1626, and was the result of a visit to the Low Countries commenced by him in 1608; also the "Crumms Fal'n from King James's Table," which consist merely of some royal "table-talk, principally relating to religion, embassayes, state policy, etc.," taken down by Overbury, and first printed in "The Prince's Cabala, or Mysteries of State," in 1715.§

* Carew's lyric, beginning "He that loves a rosy cheek," immediately suggests itself.

† "Specimens of the English Poets."

‡ Published in 1620.

§ Now included in Rimbault's edition of Overbury's "Works" in the "Library of old Authors." (J. Russell Smith.)

The "Characters, or Witty Descriptions," on which our author's fame may be said to rest, will not be generally regarded as pleasant or entertaining reading, for Overbury's prose style is frequently as crabbed as his verse, and sometimes even more obscure, and the descriptions are now and then so excessively concentrated in expression as to be rather difficult to follow. On the other hand, it is impossible not to admire their epigrammatic force, and the shrewdness of observation which they everywhere betoken. A few of them remind me, in their accumulation of minute particulars, of some of the best passages by the elder Hazlitt, and in their occasional flashes of satiric wit and humorous characterization, they are superior to anything of the kind in English literature. The workmanship may probably be a little too apparent; the pictures may be, as Hallam thinks they are,* somewhat too elaborate, too Dutch-like. But taking them as they are, and comparing them with Bishop Hall's work on the one hand, and Bishop Earle's on the other, they certainly deserve the attention of the student, though they can never hope to attract a large constituency among modern readers.

"The 'Fair and Happy Milkmaid,' oft quoted, is the best," says Hallam, "of his characters." "We hardly know any passages," says another writer,† "in English prose—and that is saying no little—which inspires the mind of the reader with so many pleasing recollections, and which spreads so calm and purifying a delight over the spirit, as it broods over the idea of the innocent girl whose image Sir Thomas has here

* "Introduction to the Literature of Europe."
† "Retrospective Review," vol. ii.

bodied forth." The passage is indeed so famous that no essay on the "Characters" would be complete that did not give it, as I propose to give it now, in full :—

"A FAIRE AND HAPPY MILK-MAYD

Is a countrey wench, that is so farre from making her selfe beautifull by art, that one looke of hers is able to put all face-physicke out of countenance. She knowes a faire looke is but a dumbe orator to commend vertue, therefore minds it not. All her excellencies stand in her so silently, as if they had stolne upon her without her knowledge. The lining of her apparell (which is her selfe) is farre better than out sides of tissew: for though she be not arrayed in the spoile of the silke-worme, shee is deckt in innocency, a far better wearing. She doth not, with lying long abed, spoile both her complexion and conditions; nature hath taught her, too immoderate sleepe is rust to the soule; she rises therefore with chaunticleare, her dames cock, and at night makes the lamb her courfew. In milking a cow, and straining the teats through her fingers, it seemes that so sweet a milk-presse makes the milk the whiter or sweeter; for never came almond glove or aromatique oyntment on her palme to taint it. The golden eares of corne fall and kisse her feet when shee reapes them, as if they wisht to be bound and led prisoners by the same hand that fell'd them. Her breath is her own, which sents all the yeare long of June, like a new made hay-cock. She makes her hand hard with labour, and her heart soft with pitty: and when winter evenings fall early (sitting at her merry wheele) she sings a defiance to the giddy wheele of fortune. She doth all things with so

sweet a grace, it seems ignorance will not suffer her to doe ill, seing her mind is to doe well. She bestows her yeares wages at next faire; and in chossing her garments, counts no bravery i' th' world, like decencie. The garden and bee-hive are all her physick and chyrurgery, and she lives the longer for't. She dares goe alone, and unfolde sheepe i' th' night, and feares no manner of ill, because she meanes none: yet to say truth, she is never alone, for she is still accompanied with old songs, honest thoughts, and prayers, but short ones; yet they have their efficacy, in that they are not pauled with insuing idle cogitations. Lastly, her dreames are so chaste, that shee dare tell them; only a Fridaies dream is all her superstition: that she conceales for fear of anger. Thus lives she, and all her care is she may die in the spring-time, to have store of flowers stucke upon her winding-sheet."

It says much for the original purity of Overbury's own nature that all his experience of Court life should still have left him with the capacity to draw so sweet and true a picture. That he always had a keen enjoyment of the pleasures of rural life may be inferred from his character of "A Franklin," which may almost be taken as a worthy pendant to "A Faire and Happy Milk-mayd."

"A FRANKLIN.

"His outside is an ancient yeoman of England, though his inside may give armes (with the best gentleman) and ne'er see the herauld. There is no truer servant in the house then himselfe. Though he be master, he sayes not to his servants, Goe to field, but,

Let us goe; and with his owne eye, doth both fatten his flock, and set forward all manner of husbandrie. Hee is taught by nature to be contented with a little; his owne fold yeelds him both food and rayment: hee is pleas'd with any nourishment God sends, whilst curious gluttony ransackes, as it were, Noahs Arke for food, onely to feed the riot of one meale. He is nere knowne to goe to law; understanding, to bee law-bound among men, is like to bee hide-bound among his beasts; they thrive not under it: and that such men sleepe as unquietly, as if their pillowes were stuft with lawyers pen-knives. When he builds, no poore tenants cottage hinders his prospect: they are indeed his almes-houses, though there be painted on them no such superscription: he never sits up late, but when he hunts the badger, the vow'd foe of his lambs: nor uses hee any cruelty, but when hee hunts the hare, nor subtilty, but when he setteth snares for the suite, or pit-falls for the blackbird; nor oppression, but when in the moneth of July, he goes to the next river, and sheares his sheepe. He allowes of honest pastime, and thinkes not the bones of the dead any thing bruised, or the worse for it, though the country lasses dance in the church-yard after evensong. Rocke Munday, and the wake in summer, shrovings, the wake-fall ketches on Christmas Eve, the hoky or seed cake, these he yeerly keepes, yet holds them no reliques of popery. He is not so inquisitive after newes derived from the privie closet, when the finding an eiery of hawkes in his owne ground, or the foaling of a colt come of a good straine, are tydings more pleasant, more profitable. Hee is lord paramount within himselfe,

though hee hold by never so meane a tenure; and dyes the more contentedly (though he leave his heire young) in regard he leaves him not liable to a covetous guardian. Lastly, to end him; hee cares not when his end comes, hee need not feare his audit, for his quietus is in heaven."

It may be interesting to contrast Overbury's poetical description of a perfect wife with his prose definition of a similar character. The latter seems to me by far the freshest and most admirable:—

"A Good Wife

Is a mans best moveable, a scien incorporate with the stocke, bringing sweet fruit; one that to her husband is more than a friend, lesse than trouble: an equall with him in the yoke. Calamities and troubles she shares alike, nothing pleaseth her that doth not him. She is relative in all; and he without her, but halfe himself. She is his absent hands, eyes, cares, and mouth: his present and absent all. She frames her nature unto his howsoever: the hiacinth followes not the sun more willingly. Stubbornnesse and obstinacy are hearbs that grow not in her garden. She leaves tattling to the gossips of the town, and is more seene than heard. Her household is her charge; her care to that makes her seldom non resident. Her pride is but to be cleanly, and her thrift not to be prodigall. By her discretion she hath children, not wantons; a husband without her, is a nursery in mans apparel: none but she hath an aged husband, to whom she is both a staffe and a chaire. To conclude, shee is both wise and religious, which makes her all this."

Roughly speaking, the "Characters" may be divided into two parts—those which refer to persons or things peculiar to the times in which the author lived, and those which attempt subjects of permanent and universal interest. The description, for instance, of "An Improvident Young Gallant" is evidently from a contemporary original:—

"An Improvident Young Gallant.

"There is a confederacy between him and his clothes, to be made a puppy: view him well, and you'll say his gentry sits as ill upon him, as if he had bought it with his penny. He hath more places to send money to, than the devill hath to send his spirits; and to furnish each mistresse, would make him run beside his wits, if he had any to lose. He accounts bashfulnesse the wickedst thing in the world, and therefore studies impudence. If all men were of his mind, all honesty would be out of fashion. He withers his clothes on a stage, as a sale-man is forc't to doe his sutes in Birchin-lane; and when the play is done, if you marke his rising, 'tis with a kind of walking epilogue between the two candles, to know if his suit may pass for currant: hee studies by the discretion of his barber, to frizle like a baboone: three such would keep three the nimblest barbers in the town, from ever having leisure to weave net garters: for when they have to doe with him, they have many irons in th' fire. He is travelled, but to little purpose; only went over for a squirt; and came back againe, yet never the more mended in his conditions, 'cause he carried himselfe along with him: a scholler he pretends himself, and saies he hath sweat

for it: but the truth is, he knowes 'Cornelius' far better than Tacitus; his ordinary sports are cock-fights: but the most frequent, horse-races, from whence hee comes home dry-foundered. Thus when his purse hath cast her calfe, he goes downe into the country, where he is brought to milke and white cheese like the Switzers."

With some slight variations, this might, indeed, apply to a certain class of young men of our own day. Still more distinctively a contemporary sketch is that of the "Almanack-Maker," who, at that time, pretended to possess powers of prophecy such as his modern namesakes carefully refrain from claiming:—

"AN ALMANACK-MAKER

Is the worst part of an astronomer: a certaine compact of figures, characters, and cyphers; out of which he scores the fortune of a year, not so profitably, as doubtfully. He is tenant by custome to the planets, of whom he holds the 12 houses by lease paroll: to them he paies yearely rent, his studie, and time; yet lets them out againe (with all his heart) for 40s. per annum. His life is merely contemplative: for his practice, 'tis worth nothing, at least not worthy of credit; and if (by chance) he purchase any, he loseth it againe at the yeares end, for time bringeth truth to light. Ptolemy and Tycho Brahe are his patrons, whose volumes hee understands not, but admires; and the rather because they are strangers, and so easier to bee credited, than controuled. His life is upright, for he is alwayes looking upward; yet dares beleeve nothing above *primum mobile*, for 'tis out of the reach

of his Jacob's staffe. His charity extends no farther than to mountebankes and sow-gelders, to whom he bequeathes the seasons of the yeare, to kill or torture by. The verses in his booke have a worse pace than ever had Rochester hackney: for his prose, 'tis dappled with inke-horne tearmes, and may serve for an almanacke: but for his judging at the uncertainty of weather, any old shepheard shall make a dunce of him. He would be thought the devils intelligencer for stolne goods, if ever he steale out of that quality: as a flie turnes to a maggot, so the corruption of the cunning-man is the generation of an empericke: his works fly foorth in small volumes, yet not all, for many ride passt to chandlers and tobacco shops in folio. To be briefe, he fals 3 degrees short of his promises; yet is hee the key to unlocke termes, and law dayes, and dumbe Mercurie to point out high wayes, and a bayliffe of all marts and faires in England. The rest of him you shall know next year; for what hee will be then, he himselfe knowes not."

Sir Thomas is at his best, perhaps, when he is indicating the characteristics of "A Noble Spirit."

"A Noble Spirit

Hath surveied and fortified his disposition, and converts all occurrents into experience, between which experience and his reason, there is marriage; the issue are his actions. He circuits his intents, and seeth the end before he shoot. Men are the instruments of his art, and there is no man without his use: occasion incites him, none enticeth him; and he moves by

affection, not for affection; he loves glory, scorns shame, and governeth and obeyeth with one countenance; for it comes from one consideration. He cals not the variety of the world chances, for his meditation hath travelled over them; and his eye mounted upon his understanding, seeth them as things underneath. He covers not his body with delicacies, nor excuseth these delicacies by his body, but teacheth it, since it is not able to defend its own imbecility, to shew or suffer. He licenceth not his weaknesse, to weare fate, but knowing reason to be no idle gift of nature, he is the steersman of his own destiny. Truth is the goddesse, and he takes paines to get her, not to look like her. Hee knowes the condition of the world, that he must act one thing like another, and then another. To these he carries his desires, and not his desires him, and stickes not fast by the way (for that contentment is repentance) but knowing the circle of all courses, of all intents, of all things, to have but one center or period, without all distraction, he hasteth thither and ends there, as his true and naturall element. He doth not contemne fortune, but not confesse her. He is no gamester of the world (which onely complaine and praise her) but being only sensible of the honesty of actions, contemnes a particular profit as the excrement or scum. Unto the society of men he is a sun, whose clearenesse directs their steps in a regular motion: when he is more particular, he is the wise mans friend, the example of the indifferent, the medicine of the vicious. Thus time goeth not from him, but with him: and he feeles age more by the strength of his soule, then the weakenes of his body; thus feeles he no

paine, but esteemes all such things as friends, that desire to file off his fetters, and helpe him out of prison."

It is to be hoped that such a noble spirit may be found as readily in the days of Victoria as in the days of James I. "The Melancholy Man" is equally common to the two eras, and as for the "Saylor;" it is to be presumed that the mariner who had fought and conquered under Drake and Frobisher, and was afterwards to fight and conquer under Blake, is identical with the gallant tar who mans our ironclads, and only waits for an opportunity to show the enemy the stuff he is made of:—

"A Saylor

Is a pitcht piece of reason calckt and tackled, and only studied to dispute with tempests. He is part of his own provision, for he lives ever pickled. A fore-wind is the substance of his creed; and fresh water the burden of his prayers. He is naturally ambitious, for he is ever climing: out of which as naturally he feares, for he is ever flying: time and he are everywhere, ever contending who shall arrive first: he is well-winded, for he tires the day, and out-runs darknesse. His life is like a hawkes, the best part mewed; and if he live till three coates, is a master. He sees Gods wonders in the deep: but so, as rather they appeare his play-fellowes, then stirrers of his zeale: nothing but hunger and hard rockes can convert him, and then but his upper decke neither; for his hold neither feares nor hopes. His sleepes are but repreevals of his dangers, and when he wakes, 'tis but next stage to dying. His wisdome is the coldest part

about him, for it ever points to the North: and it lies lowest, which makes his valour every tide ore-flow it. In a storm 'tis disputable, whether the noise be more his, or the elements, and which will first leave scolding; on which side of the ship hee may bee saved best, whether his faith bee starre-boord faith, or lar-boord; or the helme at that time not all his hope of heaven: his keele is the embleme of his conscience, till it be split he never repents, then no farther than the land allowes him, and his language is a new confusion, and all his thoughts new notions: his body and his ship are both one burthen, nor is it knowne who stowes most wine, or rowles most, only the ship is guided, he has no sterne: a barnacle and hee are bred together, both of one nature, and 'tis fear'd one reason: upon any but a wooden horse he cannot ride, and if the wind blow against him, he dare not: he swarves up to his seat as to a saile-yard, and cannot sit unlesse he beare a flag-staffe: if ever he be broken to the saddle, 'tis but a voyage still,* for he mis-takes the bridle for a bowlin, and is ever turning his horse-taile: he can pray, but 'tis by rote, not by faith, and when he works he dares not, for his brackish beleefe hath made that ominous. A rocke or a quicke-sand plucks him before hee bee ripe, else he is gathered to his friends at Wapping."

Throughout these passages it will be observed that Sir Thomas is full of the conceits which marred the best writing of his time. I have yet to represent him in the character of what I might almost term a punster,

* The reader will recollect Commodore Trunnion's amusing voyage to church, in Smollett's famous story.

so strongly do his playings upon words convey the sensation that we generally attribute to a pun. Take, for instance, his description of "A Tinker."

"A TINKER

Is a moveable, for he hath no abiding place; by his motion he gathers heat, thence his colericke nature. He seemes to be very devout, for his life is a continuall pilgrimage, and sometimes in humility goes barefoot, thereon making necessity a virtue. His house is as ancient as Tubal Cains, and so is a runnagate by antiquity: yet he proves himselfe a gallant, for he carries all his wealth upon his back; or a philosopher, for he beares all his substance about him. From his art was musick first invented, and therefore is he alwaies furnisht with a song: to which his hammer keeping time proves that he was the first founder of the kettle-drum. Note, that where the best ale is, there stands his musicke most upon crotchets. The companion of his travels is some foule sunne-burnt Queane, that since the terrible statute recanted Gipsey issue, and is turned pedleresse. So marches he all over England with his bag and baggage. His conversation is unreproveable; for hee is ever mending. Hee observes truly the statutes, and therefore he can rather steale then begge, in which he is unremoveably constant in spight of whips or imprisonment: and so a strong enemy to idlenesse, that in mending one lide, he had rather make three than want worke, and when hee hath done, hee throwes the wallet of his faults behind him. He embraceth naturally ancient custome, conversing in open fields, and lowly cottages. If he visit cities or townes, 'tis

but to deale upon the imperfections of our weaker vessels. His tongue is very voluble, which with canting proves him a linguist. He is entertain'd in every place, but enters no farther then the door, to avoid suspition. Some would take him to be a coward; but believe it, he is a man of mettle, his valour is commonly three or foure yards long, fastned to a pike in the end for flying off. He is very provident, for he will fight but with one at once, and then also hee had rather submit than be counted obstinate. To conclude, if he scape Tyburn and Banbury, he dies a begger."

"A Prisoner" is described as "one that hath been a monied man, and is still a very close fellow; whosoever is of his acquaintance, let them make much of him, for they shall find him as fast a friend as any in England; he is a sure man, and you know where to find him." "A Taylor" is represented as "partly an alchymist; for hee extracteth his owne apparell out of other mens clothes; and when occasion serveth, making a brokers shop his alembicke. . . He is in part likewise an arithmetician; cunning enough for multiplication and addition, but cannot abide subtraction. . . For any skill in Geometry, I dare not commend him; for hee could never yet find out the dimensions of his owne conscience: notwithstanding he hath many bottomes, it seemeth this is alwaies bottomlesse." Of "an ordinary Widow" it is said that "the end of her husband begins in teares; and the end of her teares begins in a husband."

Finally, the "Characters" close with a description by Sir Thomas himself of what, in his opinion, "a Character is:"—

"If I must speake," he says, "the schoole-masters language, I will confesse that character comes of this infinitive moode χαράξω, which signifieth to ingrave, or make a deepe impression. And for that cause, a letter (as A.B.) is called a character.

"Those elements which we learne first, leaving a strong seale on our memories.

"Character is also taken from an Egyptian hieroglyphicke, for an impresse, or short embleme; in little comprehending much.

"To square out a character by an English levell, it is a picture (reall or personall) quaintly drawne, in various colours, all of them heightned by one shadowing.

"It is a quicke and soft touch of many strings, all shutting up in one musicall close: it is wits descant on any plaine song."

Appended to the second edition of "The Wife," in 1614, were certain "Conceited News, written by (Overbury) himselfe and other learned Gentlemen his friends," the full title of which is afterwards given as "Newes from any Whence, or, Old Truth, under a Supposall of Noveltie. Occasioned by divers Essaies, and private passages of Wit, betweene sundrie Gentlemen upon that Subject." They are very much in the same style as the "Characters," sententious and epigrammatic almost to obscurity. Very few, indeed, however, are by Sir Thomas Overbury, and, of his contributions, that entitled "Newes from Court" seems most available for quotation here:—

"It is thought that there are as great miseries beyond happinesse, as on this side it, as being in love. That truth is every mans by assenting. That time makes every-

thing aged, and yet it selfe was never but a minute old. That, next sleep, the greatest devourer of time is businesse: the greatest stretcher of it, passion: the truest measure of it, contemplation. To be saved, alwayes is the best plot: and vertue alwayes cleares her way as she goes. Vice is ever behind-hand with it selfe. That wit and a woman are two fraile things, and both the frailer by concurring. . . . That the wisdom of action is discretion; the knowledge of contemplation is truth: the knowledge of action is men. That the first considers what should be, the latter makes use of what is. That every man is weake in his owne humours. That every man a little beyond himselfe, is a foole. That affectation is the more ridiculous part of folly then ignorance. That the matter of greatnesse is comparison. That God made one world of substances; man hath made another of art and opinion. That money is nothing but a thing which art hath turned up trumpe. That custome is the soule of circumstances. That custome hath so far prevailed, that truth is now the greatest newes."

It is only when we concede the correctness of the last remark that we are able to recognise anything but "a supposall of novelty" in these latter reflections.

But it may not be uninteresting to contrast the quotations I have given from the works of Overbury with a few short extracts from the "Microcosmography"* of Bishop Earle, to which I have already referred. It is called "A Piece of the World Charac-

* That is, "A Description of the Little World," viz., man. "The body of man (saith Zanchius) is the image of the world, and therefore called Microcosmus."—RALEIGH.

teriz'd," and consists, like Overbury's "Characters," of brief, incisive descriptions of such every-day persons as "a Childe," "a young rawe Preacher," "a grave Divine," "a meere dull Physitian," "an Alderman," "a discontented Man," "an Antiquary," "a younger Brother," and so on. It differs from Overbury's work, however, in being less vulgar, and, on the whole, more pungent, though scarcely so witty as some of the best bits of the earlier writer.

Let us take the second character of those above-named.

"A YOUNG RAWE PREACHER

Is a Bird not yet fledg'd, that hath hopt out of his nest to bee Chirping on a hedge, and will bee straggling abroad at what perill soever. His backwardnesse in the Universitie hath set him thus forward; for had hee not ruanted there, he had not beene so hastie a Divine. His small standing and time hath made him a proficient onely in boldnesse, out of which and his Table booke he is furnisht for a Preacher. His Collections of Studie are the notes of Sermons, which taken up at St. Maries, hee utters in the Country. And if he write brackigraphy, his stocke is so much the better. His writing is more than his reading; for hee reades onely what hee gets without booke. Thus accomplisht he comes down to his friends, and his first salutation is grace and peace out of the Pulpit. His prayer is conceited, and no man remembers his Colledge more at large. The Pace of his Sermon is a ful careere, and he runnes wildly over hill and dale till the clocke stop him. The labour of it is chiefly on his lungs, and

the onely thing hee ha's made of it himself, is the faces. He takes on against the Pope without mercy, and ha's a jest still in lavender for Bellarmine. Yet he preaches heresie, if it comes in his way, though with a mind I must needs say very Orthodoxe. His action is all passion, and his speech interjections: He ha's an excellent faculty in bemoaning the people, and spits with very good grace. His stile is compounded of some twenty several mens, onely his body imitates some one extraordinary. He will not draw his handkerchief out of his place, nor blow his nose without discretion. His commendation is, that he never looks upon booke, and indeed, he was never us'd to it. Hee preaches but once a yeare, though twice on Sundy; for the stuffe is still the same, onely the dressing is a little alter'd. He has more tricks with a sermon than a Tailer with an old cloak, to turne it, and piece it, and at last quite disguise it with a new preface. If he have waded farther in his profession, and would shew reading of his own, his Authors are Postils, and his Schoole-divinitie a Catechisme. His fashion and demure Habit gets him in with some Town-precisian and makes him a guest on Fryday nights. You shall know him by his narrow Velvet cape, and Serge facing, and his ruffe, next his haire, the shortest thing about him. The companion of his walke is some zealous tradesman, whom he astonisheth with strange points, which they both understand alike. His friends and much painfulnesse may preferre him to thirtie pounds a yeare, and this means, to a chamber-maide; with whom wee leave him now in the bands of Wedlocke. Next Sunday you shal have him againe."

Putting aside some particulars which obviously distinguish this as a contemporary portrait, there still remains much that will be recognised as a fairly accurate description of the "young raw preacher" of all times and countries. Let us see, now, how far the "gallant" of the seventeenth century differed from the nineteenth century "swell:"—

"A GALLANT

Is one that was born and shapt for his Cloathes: and if Adam had not falne, had liv'd to no purpose. Hee gratulates therefore the first sinne, and fig-leaves that were an occasion of braverie. His first care is his dresse, the next his bodie, and in the uniting of these two lies his soule and its faculties. Hee observes London trulier than the Termers, and his businesse is the street: the Stage, the Court, and those places where a proper man is best showne. If hee be qualified in gaming extraordinary, he is so much the more gentle and compleate, and hee learnes the beaste oathes for the purpose. These are a great part of his discourse, and he is as curious on their newnesse as in their fashion. His other Talke is Ladies and such pretty things, or some jest at a Play. His Pick-tooth beares a great parte in his discourse, so does his body; the upper parts whereof are as starcht as his linnen, and perchance use the same Laundresse. Hee has learnt to ruffle his face from his Boote, and takes great delight in his walke to heare his Spurs gingle. Though his life passe somewhat slidingly, yet he seemes very carefull of the time, for hee is still drawing his Watch out of his Poket, and spends part of his houres in

numbring them. He is one never serious but with his Taylor, when hee is in eonspiracie for the next device. He is furnisht [with] his jests, as some wanderer with his Sermons, some three for all Congregations, one especially against the Scholler, a man to him much ridiculous, whom hee knowes by no other definition, but a silly fellow in blacke. He is a kind of walking Mercer's Shop, and shewes you one Stuffe to-day, and another to-morrow, an ornament to the roomes he comes in, as the faire bed and Hangings be; and is meerely rateable accordingly, fiftie or an hundred Pound as his suit is. His maine ambition is to get a Knighthood, and then an old Ladie, which if he be happy in, he fits the Stage and a Coach so much longer. Otherwise, himselfe and his Clothes grow stale together, and he is buried commonly ere hee dies in the Gaole, or the Country."

I am afraid that, with very slight variation indeed, this description might serve for the man of fashion of the days of Victoria as well as of the days of James I.

After Earle, the "Character," as a distinct species of prose composition, died quietly out, in favour of the revival of dramatic energy which marked the reigns of Charles and James II. This, again, was succeeded by the age of the essayists, who sketched the manners and habits of their countrymen in an easier and a livelier style than was possible in an Earle or an Overbury. Still, the latter had much to do in giving a point and flexibility to the language in which Steele and Addison afterwards satirised the England and Englishmen of their day.



QUARLES'S "EMBLEMS."

FRANCIS QUARLES, born in 1592, was a native of Essex, was educated at Cambridge and Lincoln's Inn, and was successively cup-bearer to Elizabeth Queen of Bohemia, secretary to Archbishop Usher, and chronologer to the city of London. Having espoused the cause of the Royalists against the Puritans, he shared in the misfortunes which followed the downfall of the former, and the losses he sustained, both in the way of manuscripts and personal property, are said so to have preyed upon his health that they probably accelerated his death, which happened in 1644.

He had been a most voluminous writer. Besides the "Emblems," which I shall come to consider presently, he was the author of "The Feast of Worms," a poem on the history of Jonah (1620); "Pentalogia, or the Quintessence of Meditation" (also 1620); "Hadassa, or the History of Queen Esther" (1621); "Argalus and Parthenia," a poem, founded on an episode in Sidney's "Arcadia," which seems to be chiefly conspicuous for its indecency (1621); "Job Militant, with Meditations Divine and Moral" (1624); "Sion's Elegies wept by Jeremie the Prophet" (1624);

"Sion's Sonnets sung by Solomon the King, and periphras'd" (1625); "Divine Fancies, digested into Epigrammes, Meditations, and Observations" (1632); "Anniversaries upon his Parante" (1635); "Hieroglyphikes of the Life of Man" (1638); "Enchiridion, containing Institutions, Divine (Contemplative, Practical), Moral (Ethical, Œconomical, Political)"—a prose work of some merit* (1641); "Observations concerning Princes and States upon Peace and War" (1642); "Barnabas and Boanerges; Judgment and Mercy, or Wine and Oyl for Afflicted Souls" (1644); "The Shepherd's Oracles, delivered in certain Egloques" (1644); "The Whipper Whip'd" (1644); "Solomon's Recantations, entitled Ecclesiastices, paraphrased" (1645); "Profest Royalist's Quarrell with the Times" (1645); "Midnight Meditations of Death" (1646); "The Virgin Widow"—a comedy which Langbaine describes, somewhat comically, as "an innocent, inoffensive play" (1649); and some other works, which it is not necessary to mention here.

Indeed, Quarles, like many other prolific writers, is only known nowadays by *one* "famous book," "The Emblems, Divine and Moral," which first appeared in 1635. They were not, it is scarcely necessary to say, the first of their kind—not even the first of their kind in English literature, for Whitney, in 1586, and Peacham, in 1612, had already published respectively the "Choice of Emblemes, and other Devises," and "Minerva Britanna; or, a Garden of Heroical Devises;" whilst George Wither, chiefly remembered now for his lively verses, beginning—

* Reprinted in the "Library of Old Authors."

"Shall I, wasting in despair,
Die because a woman's fair?"

brought out, in the same year with Quarles's "Emblems," "A Collection of Emblemes, ancient and modern, Quickened with Metrical Illustrations, both moral and divine, and disposed into Lotteries, that instruction and good counsell may be farthered by an honest and pleasing recreation."

I have scarcely space enough to enter into the wide question of the origin of emblem-literature, farther than to say that the Greek word *ἔμβλημα* denoted merely "the thing, whether implement or ornament, placed in or thrown on, and so joined to, another thing."* With this meaning attached to it, it was applied for a long time to any pictorial representation affixed to, or traced upon, any particular substance. Hence it was inevitable that it should come eventually to be used for any painting or engraving of an allegorical character; and it was only when the allegory was not sufficiently clear and patent that the artistic production was supplemented by a literary explanation of it. It was in the Middle Ages that the two elements were generally combined in books where the pictures or designs were accompanied by prose or verse; and it was in 1522 that the first collection of historical importance made its appearance in the world. In that year Andreas Alciatus, a distinguished professor of laws, issued an "Emblematum Libellus," or "Little Book of Emblems," which, originally consisting of not more than ninety-seven emblems and as many wood-cuts, grew by-and-by into a large quarto

* Green's "Shakespeare and the Emblem-Writers."

of one thousand and four pages, with thirty-seven square inches of letterpress on each page. To this, so many of our English emblem-writers have at times been indebted—Wither especially—that a few quotations from it may not be uninteresting. The "Emblems" are all in Latin, and indicate, says Mr. Green, the writer's full acquaintance with both the Greek and Roman mythologies; but they are deficient in the easy expression which distinguishes the poet of nature above him whom learning chiefly guides, and seldom betray either the enthusiasm of genius or depth of imaginative power. No. cxx. runs thus: *—

"Dextra tenet lapidem, manus altera sustinet alas,
Ut me pluma levat, sic grave merget onus.
Ingenio poteram superas volitare per artes,
Me nisi paupertas invida deprimeret."

This was afterwards rendered by Wither in a stanza, which had at least the advantage of accurately describing the print that accompanied it. It is the forty-second in the third book:—

"You little think what plague it is to be,
In plight like him whom pictured here you see.
His winged arm and his uplifted eyes,
Declare that he hath wit and will to rise:
The stone which clogs his other hand may show,
That poverty and fortune keep him low."

Emblem clxxvii., in the "Libellum," is a helmet surrounded with bees, entitled "Ex bello pax:"—

"En galea, intrepidus quam miles gesserat et qua
Sæpius hostili sparsa cruore fuit,
Partâ pace opibus tenuis concessit in usum
Alveoli, atque favos grataque mella gerit.
Arma procul jaceant: fas sit tunc sumere bellum,
Quando aliter pacis non potes arte frui."

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* "Retrospective Review," vol. ix.

Wither, says our authority, has an emblem with the same design, with the addition of certain instruments of war. The commencement of it will serve as a translation of that of Alciatus, though the point is lost:—

"When you have heeded by your eyes of sense
This helmet hiving of a swarm of bees,
Consider what may gathered be from thence,
And what your eye of understanding sees.
That helmet and those other weapons there,
Betoken war; the honey-making flies
An emblem of a happy kingdom are,
Injoying peace by painful industries."

The following verses were written by Alciatus on the occasion of a violent plague in Italy which carried off all the young men of the locality, but left the old untouched:—

"Errabat socio Mors juncta Cupidine: secum
Mors pharetras, parvus tela gerebat Amor.
Divertêre simul, simul una et nocte cubarunt:
Cæcas Amor, Mors hoc tempore cæca fuit.
Alter enim alterius male provida spicula sumpsit:
Mors aurata, tenet ossea tela puer.
Debuit inde senex qui nunc Acheronticus esse,
Ecce amat, et capiti florea serta parat.
Ast ego mutato quia Amor me perculit arcu,
Deficio injiciunt et mihi fata manum.
Parce puer, Mors signa tenens vitricia parce:
Fac ego amem, subeat fac Acheronta senex."

This was afterwards amplified—one could scarcely call it translated—by Geoffrey Whitney, in the work to which I have already referred, the full title of which was, "A Choice of Emblemes and other Devices, for the most part gathered out of sundrie writers, Englished and Moralised. And divers newly devised, by Geoffrey Witney. A Worke adorned with a varietie of matter, both pleasant and profitable, wherein those

that please maye finde to fit their fancies, because herein, by the office of the eye and the eare, the minde maye reape dooble delighte throughe holsome precepts, shadowed with pleasant devices, both fit for the vertuous, to their incoraging, and for the wicked, for their admonishing and amendment."

Whitney's amplification of the last-quoted emblem is as follows :—

"While furious Mors from place to place did fly,
And here, and there, his fatal darts did throw:
At length he met with Cupid, passing by,
Who likewise had been busy with his bow:
Within one inn they both together stay'd.
And for one night away their shooting lay'd.
The morrow next, they both away do haste,
And each, by chance, the other's quiver takes:
The frozen darts on Cupid's back are plac'd,
The fiery darts the lean virago shakes;
Whereby ensued such alteration strange
As all the world did wonder at the change.
For gallant youths, whom Cupid thought to wound,
Of love, and life, did make an end at once;
And aged men, whom death would bring to ground,
Began again to love, with sighs and groans;
Thus nature's laws this change infringed so,
That age did love, and youth to grave did go.
Till, at the last, as Cupid drew his bow,
Before he shot, a youngling thus did cry,
'Oh, Venus' son, thy darts thou dost not know:
They pierce too deep; for all thou hitt'st do die.
Oh spare our age, who honoured thee of old,
These darts are bone; take thou the darts of gold.'
Which being said, awhile did Cupid stay,
And saw, how youth was almost clean extinct;
And age did doat with garlands fresh and gay.
And heads all bald were new in wedlock link'd:
Wherefore he showed this error unto Mors,
Who, miscontent, did change again perforce.
Yet so, as both some darts again convey'd,
Which were not theirs; yet unto neither known,
Some bony darts in Cupid's quiver stay'd,
Some golden darts had Mors among his own.
Then, when we see untimely death appear,
Or wanton age:—it was this chance you hear.

There seems to me a decided infusion of poetry in these lines, which are commendably free from the conceits that too frequently manifest themselves in the English verse of that period.

Take, again, the emblem entitled, "Murus æreus sana conscientia:"—

"Both fresh, and green, the laurel standeth sound,
Though lightnings flash and thunder-bolts do fly,
Where other trees are blasted to the ground,
Yet, not one leaf of it is withered dry:
Even so, the man that hath a conscience clear,
When wicked men do quake at every blast,
Doth constant stand, and doth no peril fear,
When tempests rage do make the world aghast:
Such men are like unto the laurel tree,
The others like the blasted boughs that die."

This is neatly turned; the emblem I shall quote next is not quite so successful. It is called "Strenuorum immortale nomen."

"Achilles' tomb upon Sigæea's shore,
This represents: where Thetis oft was seen,
And for his loss did seem for to deplore;
With gallant flowers the same was always green:
And at the top a palm did freshly bloom,
Whose branches sweet did overspread the tomb.
Which shows, though death the valiant overthrow,
Yet after fate, their fame remains behind;
And triumphs still, and doth no conquest know,
But is the badge of every noble mind;
And when in grave their corps inclosed lie,
Their famous acts do pierce the azure sky."

The following is somewhat commonplace, perhaps; but all elementary morality is commonplace from one point of view, and what is stale to us in the nineteenth century was, I dare say, comparatively fresh to our forefathers in the reign of Elizabeth:—

ANIMUS, NON RES.

"In christal towers, and turrets richly set
With glittering gems, that shine against the sun:
In regall rooms of jasper, and of jet,
Content of mind not always likes to won:
But oftentimes, it pleaseth her to stay
In simple cotes, closed in with walls of clay.

"Diogenes, within a tun did dwell,
No choice of place, no store of pelf he had:
And all his goods, could Bias bear right well,
And Codrus had small cotes his heart to glad:
His meat was root: his table was a stool,
Yet these for wit did set the world to school.

"Who covets still, or he that lives in fear,
As much delight is wealth unto his mind,
As music is to him that cannot hear,
Or pleasant shows and pictures to the blind;
Then sweet content oft likes the mean estate,
Which is exempt and free from fear and hate.

"What man is rich? not he that doth abound.
What man is poor? not he that hath no store.
But he is rich that makes content his ground,
And he is poor that covets more and more,
Which proves the man was richer in the tun,
Than was the king that many lands had won."

I now come to notice the emblems of Henry Peacham, a member of Trinity College, Cambridge, who was at once travelling tutor, musician, painter, and author, and who, falling upon evil days, "wrote penny pamphlets for his bread."* The following is a specimen of his verse:—

VOS VOBIS.

"The painful bee, who many a bitter show'r
And storm had felt, far from his hive away,
To seek the sweetest honey-bearing flower,
That might be found, and was the pride of May.
Here lighting on the fairest he might spy,
Is beat by drones, by wasp and butterfly.

* Collier's "Bibliographical Account of Early English Poetry."

"So men there are sometimes of good desert,
Who painfully have labour'd for the hive,
Yet must they with their merits stand apart,
And give a far inferior leave to thrive:
Or be perhaps, if gotten into grace,
By waspish envy beaten out of place."

This sounds as if it were the result of the poor writer's personal experience; and the same may be said of the pendent emblem which I now subjoin:—

SIC VOS NON VOBIS.

"These little creatures here, as white as milk,
That shame to sloth, are busy at their loom
All summer long in weaving of their silk,
Do make their webs both winding-sheet and tomb;
Thus to th' ungrateful world bequeathing all
Their lives have gotten at their funeral.

"Even so the webs our wits for others weave
Even from the highest to the meanest worm,
But siren-like in the end ourselves deceive,
Who spend our time to serve another's turn,
Or paint a fool with coat or colours gay,
To give good words or thanks, so go his way."

Peacham's book was published, I may repeat, in 1612; Wither's, from which I am about to make still farther extracts, in 1635. It will be curious to compare his work with that of his contemporary, Quarles.

Its origin is thus described in the preface: "These emblems," he says, "graven in copper by Crispinus Passæus (with a motto in Greek, Latin, or Italian round about every figure, and with two lines or verses in one of the same languages, paraphrasing these mottoes), came to my hands almost twenty years past. The verses were so mean, that they were afterwards cut off from the plates. . . . Yet the workmanship being judged very good for the most part, and the rest excusable, some of my friends were

so much delighted in the graver's art, and in those illustrations, which for mine own pleasure I had made upon some few of them, that they requested me to moralise the rest, which I condescended unto; and they had been brought to view many years ago, but that the copper prints (which are now gotten) could not be procured out of Holland upon any reasonable conditions. If they were worthy of the graver's and printer's cost, being only dumb figures, little useful to any but to young gravers or painters; they may now be much more worthy, seeing the life of speech being added unto them may make them teachers and remembrancers of profitable things." I quote all these particulars because they seem to me peculiarly illustrative of the author's conceit, and also because it seems to hint that the use of emblem-writing in England was owing very much to the decline of emblem-drawing, which must have been very bad indeed to require such elaborate explanation. Wither, however, quite flatters himself that his poetical illustrations are of remarkable value; "For when," he says, "levity or a childish delight in trifling objects hath allured" men "to look on the pictures, curiosity may urge them to peep further, that they might seek out their meanings in our annexed illustrations, in which may lurk some sentence or expression, so evidently pertinent to their estates, persons, or affections, as will, that instant or afterwards, make way for those considerations, which will at last wholly change them, or much better them in their conversation." I am afraid few people were ever moved to goodness by the emblem writers, though Quarles's book—and I

dare say Wither's—was very popular in his time, and is even now to be met with in some old-fashioned families. It would be difficult to say which of the two is dullest; but perhaps Wither, in spite of his self-satisfaction, is the least interesting, as he is certainly the least famous in that particular branch of literature. I imagine that he was not very successful in securing readers of his curious device of what he calls a lottery. This was put forward in deference to the wishes of his publisher, who seems to have felt that the attractiveness of the emblems themselves was not very great. The scheme was as follows:—At the end of each four books of emblems was a string of fifty-six verses on different tempers, virtues, qualities, and so on, the first fifty of each of which answered to, and were illustrated by, the fifty emblems that composed each book. At the end of the volume were two circular indexes, one to the books, and the other to the numbers of the verses; and, by turning the pointer of these indexes, the book and number of the verses were found, and the inquiries of the curious answered.

We must not, however, be too severe upon Wither's emblematic compositions. A critic in the "Retrospective Review" considers that their general character is that of a sound morality enforced in a sensible style, tinctured with warm religious feelings, and some of them adorned with a few fresh and fragrant flowers of poetry. How far this is true may be judged from the few quotations that I have space to include. The following is given by the aforesaid critic as a specimen of the same morality that he attributes to Wither:—

"How fond are they, who spend their precious time
In still pursuing their deceiving pleasures!
And they, that unto airy titles climb,
Or tire themselves in hoarding up of treasures!
For, these are death's, who, when with weariness
They have acquired most, sweeps all away;
And leaves them, for their labours, to possess
Nought but a raw-bon'd carcase wrapt in clay.
Of twenty hundred thousands, who, this hour
Vaunt much of those possessions they have got;
Of their new purchas'd honours, or the power,
By which they seem to have advanc'd their lot:
Of this great multitude, there shall not three
Remain for any future age to know;
But perish quite, and quite forgotten be,
As beasts devoured twice ten years ago.
Thou therefore, who desir'st for aye to live,
And to possess thy labours maugre death,
To needful arts and honest actions give
Thy span of time, and thy short blast of breath.
In holy studies exercise thy mind;
In works of charity thy hands employ;
That knowledge, and that treasure seek to find,
Which may enrich thy heart with perfect joy.
So, though obscured thou appear awhile,
Despised, poor, or born to fortunes low,
Thy virtues shall acquire a nobler stile,
Than greatest kings are able to bestow:
And gain thee those possessions, which, nor they,
Nor time, nor death have power to take away."

The next is given as an example of the "fresh and fragrant flowers of poetry:"—

"When, all the years, our fields are fresh and green,
And, while sweet flowers, and sunshine, every day,
(As oft, as need requireth), come between
The heavens and earth; they heedless pass away.
The fulness, and continuance of a blessing,
Doth make us to be senseless of the good:
And, if it sometime fly not our possessing,
The sweetness of it is not understood.

"Had we no winter, summer would be thought
Not half so pleasing: and, if tempests were not,
Such comforts could not by a calm be brought:
For things, save by their opposites, appear not.

Both health, and wealth, is tasteless unto some,
And, so is ease, and every other pleasure,
Till poor, or sick, or grieved, they become;
And, then, they relish these, in ample measure.

"God, therefore (full as kind, as He is wise),
So temp'reth all the favours He will do us,
That we his bounties may the better prize;
And make his chastisements less bitter to us.
One while, a scorching indignation burns
The flowers and blossoms of our hopes away;
Which into scarcity our plenty turns,
And changeth unmown-grass to parched hay;
Anon, his fruitful showers, and pleasing dews,
Commixt with cheerful rays, He sendeth down;
And then the barren earth her crop renews,
Which with rich harvests, hills and vallies crown:
For us to relish joys He sorrows sends,
So comfort on temptation still attends."

Nothing could well be more correct and commonplace than this; but it may be said of it, as of the emblems of Alciatus, that it probably read "freshly" enough to its earlier readers. Otherwise, to a nineteenth-century critic, the "poetry" is not particularly obvious.

Of Quarles, whose "Emblems Divine and Moral" we now come to consider, the fame is much greater than the fame of Wither. His work has of late years had the advantage of being illustrated by the fanciful and facile pencil of C. H. Bennett, and the opinion of the great body of the critics is, on the whole, strongly in his favour. Wood * talks of him as the "old puritanical poet, the some time darling of our plebeian judgment," meaning, I presume, by "puritanical," that he displayed in his writings the religious fervour of the Puritans, for otherwise, as I have said, he was a supporter of the royal cause. Baxter thought that

* "Athenæ Oxonienses."

Quarles outdid all the poets, and Phillips* corroborates Wood so far as to say that the Emblems were "in wonderful veneration among the vulgar." "Milton," says Horace Walpole,† "was forced to wait till the world had done admiring Quarles," of whom Lloyd, whose "Memoirs" appeared in 1668, said that "his pious books by the fancy take the heart; having taught poetry to be witty without profaneness, wantonness, or being satyrical; that is, without the poet's abusing God, himself, or his neighbour." "He was a poet," says Langbaine,‡ "that mix'd Religion and Fancy together; and was very careful in all his Writings, not to intrench upon Good Manners, by any Scurrility in his Works, or any way offending against his Duty to God, his Neighbour, and himself." "His visible poetry," says old Fuller,§ "(I mean his 'Emblems'), is excellent, catching therein the eye and fancy at one draught, so that he hath out-Alciated therein, in some men's judgement. His verses on Job are done to the life, so that the Reader may see his sores, and through them the anguish of his soul."

So say the elder critics. The younger are not less unstinted in their praise. "We find in Quarles," says Headley, "original imagery, striking sentiment, fertility of expression, and happy combination; together with a compression of style that merits the observation of the writers of verse." "He is often eloquent," says Todd, "and often extremely pathetic." "I think," says Ryland, "Quarles may be called the

* "Theatrum Poetarum Anglicarum."
† "Letters," ed. 1861, iii. 99. ‡ "Dramatic Poets" (1691).
§ "Worthies of England," under "Essex."

first, as Herbert was the second, divine poet of the English nation." "His writings," remarks James Montgomery, "are occasionally defaced by vulgarisms, and deformed by quaint conceits, but his beauties abundantly atone for his defects; the latter being comparatively few, while his works are generally characterized by great learning, lively fancy, and profound piety." "He uses language," says Thoreau, "sometimes as greatly as Shakespeare; and, though there is not much straight grain in him, there is plenty of tough crooked timber. In an age when Herbert is revived, Quarles ought surely not to be forgotten."

It is difficult—it may almost seem presumptuous—to contend against so much commendation, though the critics quoted are scarcely, any of them, the sort of judges to whom one would pin one's faith. To be sure, Quarles was pious,—at least in the "Emblems," if not in the "Argalus and Parthenia," though his piety is a little disfigured by the familiarity with which he treats the most sacred subjects. The writers of his day were always treating the Almighty, as Mr. Arnold says so many regard Him nowadays, as the man in the next street, whose person and character it is allowable to discuss with as much freedom as ignorance. Quarles was pious, no doubt, but his piety, however suited to the Englishmen of that period, is assuredly not suited to the Englishmen or women of to-day, and excites in the modern mind considerably more ridicule and disgust than edification.

I do not lay so much stress upon the thefts from Hermann Hugo, whose emblems are constantly imitated, and whose woodcuts were transferred bodily to the

original edition of Quarles's work. The latter were by many considered superior to the literature by which they were accompanied; and Pope, in his "Dunciad," remarks:—

> "Or where the pictures for the page atone,
> And Quarles is saved by beauties not his own."

Pope was probably thinking of a passage such as the following, which Campbell quotes as a specimen of the "absurdity" to which the muse of Quarles was sometimes, I may say frequently, reduced:—

> "Man is a tennis-court, his flesh the wall,
> The gamesters God and Satan,—the heart's the ball;
> The higher and the lower hazards are
> Too bold presumption and too base despair:
> The rackets which our restless balls make fly,
> Adversity and sweet prosperity.
> The angels keep the court, and make the place
> Where the ball falls, and chalk out every chase.
> The line's a civil life we often cross,
> O'er which the ball, not flying, makes a loss.
> Detractors are like standers-by, and bet
> With charitable men, our life's the set.
> Lord, in these conflicts, in those fierce assaults,
> Laborious Satan makes a world of faults.
> Forgive them, Lord, although he ne'er implore
> For favour, they'll be set upon our score.
> O take the ball before it come to ground,
> For this base court has many a false rebound;
> Strike, and strike hard, and strike above the line,
> Strike where thou please, so as the set be thine."

Such, undoubtedly, were the elaborate metaphors that delighted our ancestors, and probably even now delight a few. That Quarles, however, was a poet, in the true sense of the term, is a proposition to which, I imagine, no critic of eminence would now assent, and of this no better proof could be afforded than the emblem with which his book begins, and which runs as follows. It is called "The Invocation:"—

"Rouse thee, my soul; and drain thee from the dregs
Of vulgar thoughts; *screw up the heightened pegs*
Of thy sublime Theorbo four notes high'r,
And high'r yet, that so the shrill mouth'd quire
Of swift-wing'd seraphims may come and join,
And make the concert more than half divine.
Invoke no muse; let Heav'n be thine Apollo;
And let his sacred influences hallow
Thy high-bred strains, let his full beams inspire
Thy ravish'd brains with more heroic fire:
Snatch thee no quill from the spread eagle's wing,
And, like the morning lark, mount up and sing.
Cast off these dangling plummets, that so clog
Thy lab'ring heart, which grop·s in this dark fog
Of dungeon earth; let flesh and blood forbear
To stop thy flight, till this base world appear
A thin blue landscape: let thy pinions soar
So high a pitch, that men may seem no more
Than pismires, crawling on the mole-hill earth,
Thine ear untroubled with their frantic mirth;
Let not the frailty of thy flesh disturb
Thy new-concluded peace; let reason curb
Thy hot-mouth'd passion; and let Heav'n's fire season
The fresh conceits of thy corrected reason.
Disdain to warm thee at lust's smoky fires,
Scorn, scorn to feed on thy old bloat desires.
Come, come, my soul, *hoist up thy higher sails*,
The wind blows fair; shall we still creep like snails,
That glide their ways with their own native slimes;
No, we must fly like eagles, and our rhymes
Must mount to Heav'n, and reach the Olympic ear;
Our Heav'n-blown fire must seek no other sphere.
Thou great Theanthropos, that giv'st and ground'st
Thy gifts in dust, and from our dunghill crown'st
Reflecting honour, *taking by retail*
What thou hast giv'n in gross, from lapsed, frail,
And sinful man: that drink'st full draughts, wherein
Thy children's lep'rous fingers, scurf'd with sin,
Have paddled; cleanse. O cleanse my crafty soul
From secret crimes, and let thy thoughts control
My thoughts: O teach me stoutly to deny
Myself, that I may be no longer I:
Enrich my fancy, clarify my thoughts,
Refine my dross; *O wink at human faults;*
And *through the slender conduit of my quill*
Convey thy current, whose clear stream may fill
The hearts of men with love, their tongues with praise:
Crown me with glory, take, who list, the bays."

One can hardly believe that this sort of thing was

once the popular literature of England. Yet so it was. The most unpoetical metaphors, such as I have ventured to italicize, seem to have been regarded as the purest emanations of the imaginative faculty; and so long as a writer was sufficiently terse, and properly particular in his references, it did not matter if he resulted in being obscure and vulgar. The sentiments that Quarles propounds are, in themselves, no doubt, almost all that could be desired; his aspirations are of the most creditable nature, and probably filled with pious emotion the hearts and minds of the good Puritan dames of the Commonwealth. But we can imagine how they would be treated by the gay cavaliers of that and of the second Charles's time. Morality, cut into lengths, and enforced by the most eccentric diction and far-fetched metaphor, was very different from the pabulum provided by the Sucklings and the Lovelaces, the Sedleys and Rochesters of the Stuart period; and we know which of the two it is that is most likely to go down to posterity. Licentious as much of the cavalier poetry was, it was nevertheless poetry. They seem—these men—to have had a wonderful command of style, and their productions live by virtue of the very felicity of form and expression which is so conspicuously wanting in the "Emblems" of Quarles.

We must not, however, condemn him completely till we have considered a few of those passages to which his admirers have been wont to point as containing the beauties they claim as his possession. Let us take the good old worthy at his best, and see how far it may be possible to modify our judgment.

Hearken to one of his most favourable critics. "Who," he says, "can read such lines as the following without fully awarding the meed that is due to them?—

'We can cross the sea, and 'midst her waves we burn;
Transporting lives, perchance, that ne'er return!'

Again, when alluding to worldlings, he remarks:—

'Be wisely worldly, but not worldly wise.'*

Surely there is both truth and beauty in this picture of the soul of the Christian:—

'No hope deceives it, and no doubt divides it;
No grief disturbs it, and no error guides it.
No good contemns it, and no virtue blames it;
No guilt condemns it, and no folly shames it;
No sloth besots it, and no lust enthrals it;
No scorn afflicts it, and no passion galls it.'

The descriptions of Quarles likewise display an uncommon skill. Contemplate his portraiture of glutony:—

'Think'st thou that paunch, that burlies out thy coat,
Is thriving fat; or flesh, that seems so brawny?
Thy paunch is dropsied, and thy cheeks are bloat,
Thy lips are white, and thy complexion tawny;
Thy skin's a bladder, blown with wat'ry tumours;
Thy flesh a trembling bog, a quagmire full of humours.'

Quarles has, unquestionably, high merit. Passages such as the foregoing, and of such many may be found, compensate for all his quaintness."

Perhaps. I cannot say I think so. The above description may be graphic; it is certainly vulgar; and it is certainly *not* poetical. And our critic must be very

* Our commentator is lucky enough in this one quotation, which is, I suppose, the solitary sentence by Quarles which lingers in the memory of his countrymen.

thankful for small mercies if he can find anything to admire in the first-quoted couplet. The third quotation is the baldest prose. A much more favourable specimen of Quarles's poetry may be found in the third Emblem of Book I., which runs as follows :—

"Alas, fond child,
How are thy thoughts beguil'd
To hope for honey from a nest of wasps?
Thou may'st as well
Go seek for ease in hell,
A sprightly nectar from the mouths of asps.

"The world's a hive,
From whence thou canst derive
No good, but what thy soul's vexation brings:
But case thou meet
Some pretty-pretty sweet,
Each drop is guarded with a thousand stings.

"Why dost thou make
These murm'ring troops forsake
The safe protection of their waxen homes?
Their hive contains
No sweet that's worth thy pains;
There's nothing here, alas! but empty combs.

"For trash and joys
And grief-engend'ring joys,
What torment seems too sharp for flesh and blood;
What bitter pills,
Compos'd of real ills,
Men swallow down to purchase one false good!

"The dainties here
Are least what they appear;
Though sweet in hopes, yet in fruition sour;
The fruit that's yellow
Is found not always mellow;
The fairest tulip's not the sweetest flow'r.

"Fond youth, give o'er,
And vex thy soul no more,
In seeking what were better far unfound;
Alas! thy gains
Are only present pains
To gather scorpions for a future wound.

"What's earth? or in it,
That longer than a minute
Can lend a free delight that can endure?
O who would droil
Or delve in such a soil,
Where gain's uncertain, and the pain is sure?"

Something should be said as to the manner in which the "Emblems" are arranged. They are divided into five books, each book containing fifteen emblems, and each emblem consisting first of the pictorial representation, then the text, then the poetical illustration, then one or more quotations from some of the fathers, and then a poetical epigram. Thus the complete order of number six of Book V. is thus:—

PSALM lxxiii. 25.

"Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee?"

"I love (and have some cause to love) the earth;
She is my Maker's creature, therefore good:
She is my mother, for she gave me birth;
She is my tender nurse; she gave me food:
But what a creature, Lord, compar'd with thee?
Or what's my mother, or my nurse, to me?

"I love the air; her dainty sweets refresh
My drooping soul, and to new sweets invite me;
Her shrill-mouth'd choir sustain me with their flesh,
And with their Polyphonian notes delight me:
But what's the air, and all the sweets, that she
Can bless my soul withal, compar'd to thee?

"I love the sea; she is my fellow-creature,
My careful purveyor; she provides me store:
She walls me round; she makes my diet greater;
She wafts my treasure from a foreign shore:
But, Lord of oceans, when compar'd with thee,
What is the ocean, or her wealth to me?

"To Heaven's high city I direct my journey,
Whose spangled suburbs entertain mine eye;
Mine eye, by contemplation's great attorney,
Transcends the crystal pavement of the sky:
But what is Heav'n, great God, compar'd to thee?
Without thy presence, Heav'n's no Heav'n to me.

"Without thy presence, earth gives no refection;
Without thy presence, sea affords no treasure;
Without thy presence, air's a rank infection;
Without thy presence, Heav'n itself's no pleasure;
If not possess'd, if not enjoy'd in thee,
What's earth, or sea, or air, or Heav'n, to me?

"The highest honours that the world can boast
Are subjects far too low for my desire;
The brightest beams of glory are (at most)
But dying sparkles of thy living fire:
The proudest flames that earth can kindle be
But nightly glow-worms, if compar'd to thee.

"Without thy presence, wealth are bags of care;
Wisdom, but folly; joy, disquiet, sadness;
Friendship is treason, and delights are snares;
Pleasure's but pain, and mirth but pleasing madness;
Without thee, Lord, things be not what they be,
Nor have they being, when compar'd with thee.

"In having all things, and not thee, what have I?
Not having thee, what have my labours got?
Let me enjoy but thee, what farther crave I?
And having thee alone, what have I not?
I wish nor sea, nor land; nor would I be
Possess'd of Heav'n, Heav'n unpossess'd of thee.

"S. BONAVENT. *Soliloq. cap.* 1.

"Alas! my God, now I understand (but blush to confess) that the beauty of thy creatures hath deceived mine eyes, and I have not observed that thou art more amiable than all thy creatures; to which thou hast communicated but one drop of thy inestimable beauty: for who hath adorned the heavens with stars? who hath stored the air with fowl, the waters with fish, the earth with plants and flowers? but what are all these but a small spark of divine beauty.

"S. CHRYS. *Hom. v. in Ep. ad Rom.*

"In having nothing, I have all things, because I have Christ. Having therefore all things in Him, I seek no other reward; for He is the universal reward.

"EPIG. 6.

"Who would not throw his better thoughts about him,
And scorn this dross within him; that, without him?
Cast up, my soul, thy clearer eye; behold,
If thou be fully melted, there's the mould."

It would appear from the dedication of the "Em-

blems," that they were written, if not at the suggestion, at least with the encouragement of Edward Bendlowes, the author of "Theophila," whom Pope describes as "propitious to blockheads," and of whom Warburton said that he was "famous for his own bad poetry and for patronising bad poets." "You," says Quarles, "have put the theorbo into my hand, and I have played; you gave the musician the first encouragement; the music returneth to you for patronage. Had it been a light air, no doubt but it had taken the most, and among them the worst; but being a grave strain, my hopes are, that it will please the best, and among them you. Toyish airs please trivial ears; they kiss the fancy and betray it. They cry, Hail, first; and, after, Crucify. Let daws delight to immerse themselves in dung, whilst eagles scorn so poor a game as flies. Sir, you have art and candour; let the one judge, let the other excuse your most affectionate friend, Fra. Quarles."

So much to Bendlowes. To the reader Quarles has this to say: "An emblem is but a silent parable: Let not the tender eye check to see the allusion to our blessed Saviour figured in these types. In Holy Scriptures He is sometimes called a Sower, sometimes Fisher, sometimes a Physician; and why not presented so, as well to the eye as to the ear? Before the knowledge of letters, God was known by hieroglyphics. And, in deed what are the heavens, the earth, nay, every creature, but Hieroglyphics and Emblems of his glory? I have no more to say, I wish thee as much pleasure in the reading, as I had in writing. Farewell, reader."

BROWNE'S "RELIGIO MEDICI."

THE popular conception of Sir Thomas Browne is probably to the effect that he was a writer who, of his own free will and choice, was accustomed to choose dismal subjects for his works, and whose treatment of those subjects was not of the liveliest or most inspiriting character. "Religio Medici," "Hydrotaphia," "Pseudodoxia Epidemica," "The Garden of Cyrus:" these are not titles calculated to reassure the ordinary student who has already but a faint idea of what Browne really wrote. And we must not be surprised, therefore, if he is emphatically one of those great English authors whose reputation is wider than the knowledge of their writings, and with whom the acquaintance even of the best read men is often of the most superficial character. He is certainly not a lively writer. Indeed, it is to be doubted if any of the prose writers of his age were lively writers in our modern sense of the term; and Sir Thomas Browne was especially predisposed to look upon things in general with a solemn eye. No man was probably less affected than he by the stirring events that were enacted round him through the greater part of his lifetime. Whilst Puritan and

Cavalier were engaged in the deadly struggle which forms one of the most striking features of our annals, Sir Thomas Browne was calmly occupied in the composition of his treatise on "Urn Burial;" and a similar indifference to merely worldly and ephemeral matters is to be traced in his conduct throughout all his career. He seems to have been naturally of a reflective turn of mind; and this habit of contemplation, united to a learning the magnitude of which was rare even in that age of learned men, obviously resulted in works of literature whose leading characteristics are the depth and breadth of their erudition and their wealth of moralising and observation. Scarcely less remarkable, however, than these leading features are the invariable moderation of his tone, and his almost invariable freedom from the bigotry and superstition that were so sadly rampant in the seventeenth century. To be sure, his works exhibit occasional signs of a credulity which is all the more conspicuous in contrast to his customary attitude of scepticism; but the greatest writer cannot altogether free himself from the vices and follies of his time, and Sir Thomas would not have been human if he had been without fault. To the observant reader the imperfections of his works are manifest; his style, though flowing, is not without occasional ruggedness, and his diction is frequently disfigured by the jargon common in writers of that particular period. Nor is Browne a great logician: his books seem to have been written without any settled plan, and his thoughts were apparently set down as they occurred to him, not because they fell instinctively into their proper places. Yet the thoughts,

when they do occur, are so fine in themselves, and are so finely expressed; his pages are generally so free from pedantry, and are informed by so wise a spirit of charity, that it is impossible his fame shall ever be less than it is now, or, indeed, than it was in his lifetime.

He was born in London, on the 19th of October, 1605, and was the son of a merchant of good family, his mother being the daughter of a Mr. Paul Garraway, of Lewes. His father died very shortly after the birth of Thomas, and, his mother venturing eventually upon a second marriage, he was left to the care of his guardians, one of whom is said to have defrauded him of a part of his property.* He was educated, in the first place, at Winchester, from whence he went, in 1613,† to Oxford, where he took his degree of B.A. in 1626, and that of M.A. in 1629. He then turned his attention to the study of physic, and for a short time, it is said, actually practised it in Oxfordshire.† But he seems soon to have wearied of the profession, and, "either induced by curiosity or invited by promises,‡ he quitted his settlement," and accompanied his father-in-law, Sir Thomas Dutton, on a tour of inspection of the castles and forts in Ireland. That country, however, had, as Johnson remarks, very little to offer at that time to the observation of a man of letters. He therefore passed into France and Italy, appearing first at Montpellier, then a celebrated school of medicine, and afterwards at Padua, which was noted for the views held by some of its members on the subjects of astronomy and necromancy. "During his

* Whitefoote's "Character of Sir Thomas Browne."
† Wood's "Athenæ Oxonienses." ‡ Johnson's "Life of Browne."

residence here, Browne doubtless acquired some of his peculiar ideas on the science of the heavens and the black art; and, what was more, he learnt to regard the Romanists with that abundant charity we find throughout his works. From Padua, Browne went to Leyden; and this sudden change from a most bigoted Roman Catholic to a most bigoted Protestant country was not without its effect upon his mind."* Here, too, he took his degree of Doctor of Medicine, and about the year 1634 he is supposed to have returned to London.† A little later he settled as a physician at Shipden Hall, near Halifax,‡ and here, about the year 1635, he is said to have composed the work to which this chapter is devoted. "In such a spot," says Mr. Wilkin,§ "and especially at the commencement of his professional career, he must have had considerable leisure, which it is very natural to suppose he would endeavour to improve by reviewing and preparing some memento of the events of his past life. We may regard 'Religio Medici' as the result of such a retrospect, for though not pretending to the character of a narrative, it makes frequent allusions to incidents and conversations which had occurred in the course of his travels, and exhibits to us the impressions made on him by the imposing ceremonies of the Romish Church, which he had witnessed abroad."

"There seems no sufficient reason," says the same writer, "to question the sincerity of Browne's declara-

* J. Willis Bund's ed. of the "Religio Medici," in the Bayard Series.

† "Biographia Britannica." ‡ Watson's "History of Halifax."

§ Bohn's Classical Library.

cise and satisfaction, and not intended for publication." Johnson, indeed, is ungenerous enough to believe that the first anonymous publication, in 1642, was contrived by Browne, who, being "much pleased with his performance, probably thought it might please others as much. He therefore communicated it to his friends, and receiving, I suppose, that exuberant applause with which every man repays the grant of perusing a manuscript, he was not very diligent to obstruct his own praise by recalling his papers, but suffered them to wander from hand to hand, till at last, without his own consent, they were given to a printer. This has, perhaps," says Johnson, "sometimes befallen others, and this, I am willing to believe, did really happen to Dr. Browne; but there is surely some reason to doubt the truth of the complaint so frequently made of surreptitious editions. A song or an epigram may be easily printed without the author's knowledge, because it may be learned when it is repeated, or may be written out with very little trouble; but a long treatise, however elegant, is not often copied by mere zeal or curiosity, but may be worn out in passing from hand to hand before it is multiplied by a transcript. It is easy to convey an imperfect book, by a distant hand, to the press, and plead the circulation of a false copy as an excuse for publishing the true, or to correct what is found faulty or offensive, and charge the errors on the transcriber's depravations. This is a stratagem by which an author panting for fame, and yet afraid of seeming to challenge it, may at once gratify his vanity and preserve the appearance of modesty—may enter the lists and secure a retreat; and this, candour

might suffer to pass undetected as an innocent fraud, but that indeed no fraud is innocent, for the confidence which makes the happiness of society is in some degree diminished by every man whose practice is at variance with his words."

All this elaborate insinuation is, however, sufficiently nullified by the plain and unaffected statement of Sir Thomas himself. In the address "to the reader," prefixed to the first authorised edition, in 1643, he says, "Had not almost every man suffered by the press, or were not the tyranny thereof become universal, I had not wanted reason for complaint; but in times wherein I have lived to behold the highest perversion of that excellent invention, the name of his Majesty defamed, the Houses of Parliament depraved, the writings of both depravedly, anticipatively, counterfeitly imprinted, complaints may seem ridiculous in private persons, and men of my condition may be as incapable of affronts, as hopeless in their reparations. And truly had not the duty I owe to the importunity of friends, and the allegiance I must ever acknowledge unto truth, prevailed with me, the inactivity of my disposition might have made these sufferings continual, and time, that brings other things to light, should have satisfied me in the remedy of its oblivion. But because things evidently false are not only printed, but many things of truth most falsely set forth; in this latter I could not but think myself engaged: for, though we have no power to redress the former, yet in the other reparation, being within ourselves, I have at present represented unto the world a full and intended copy of that piece which was most

imperfectly and surreptitiously published before. This, I confess, about seven years past, with some others of affinity thereto, for my private exercise and satisfaction, I had at leisurable hours composed; which being communicated unto one, it became common unto many, and was by transcription successively corrupted, until it arrived in a most depraved copy at the press. He that shall peruse that work, and shall take notice of sundry particulars and personal expressions therein, will easily discern the intention was not public."

If further proof be needed, especially in respect to the alleged improbability of transcription, it may be urged, as Mr. Wilkin urges most conclusively, that there is ample proof of the work having been repeatedly transcribed in manuscript. Two complete copies were in Mr. Wilkin's possession, a third exists in the Bodleian Library, and part of a fourth in the British Museum, none of them being transcripts of an existing edition. One of these, though so nearly approaching the edition of 1642 as to lead to the belief that they had a common origin, is clearly not a copy from it; two others differ from it still more widely, but resemble each other sufficiently to be considered as the descendants of a second original manuscript; the other is a fragment, but is interesting, Mr. Wilkin thinks, both as possessing a date three years earlier than the spurious edition, and as containing some curious variations from every other manuscript and edition. Mr. Wilkin is perfectly satisfied, therefore, that Sir Thomas Browne had several originals written by his own hand, differing from each other. This opinion is confirmed,

by the information of those who knew him, "that it was his constant practice to make repeated copies of his compositions," as well as by an examination of his remaining manuscripts. There are, in his commonplace-books, many pages occupied by passages which, with slight variations, occur in his printed works, especially in "Hydrotaphia," "The Garden of Cyrus," and "Christian Morals," besides several of the "Tracts" entire, and of the "Urn Burial" two copies, both differing from the printed copy. There is sufficient evidence, too, that he was very willing to lend out his works in manuscript, and some of his lesser pieces were even so composed at the request of his friends and for their use. It is therefore easily to be supposed, that one of those copies of "Religio Medici" which he had lent, found its way, "without his assent or privacy," to the press.

Meanwhile the surreptitious edition was selling with uncommon rapidity. It was no sooner published, says Johnson, "than it excited the attention of the public by the novelty of paradoxes, the dignity of sentiment, the quick succession of images, the multitude of abstruse allusions, the subtlety of disquisition, and the strength of language.

"What is much read will be much criticized. The Earl of Dorset recommended this book to the perusal of Sir Kenelm Digby, who returned his judgment upon it, not in a letter, but a book; in which, though mingled with some positions fabulous and uncertain, there are acute remarks, just censures, and profound speculations, yet its principal claim to admiration is that it was written in twenty-four hours, of which part

was spent in procuring Browne's book, and part in reading it." It appeared in the same year as the authorised version of the "Religio Medici," printed in the same size, and containing one hundred and twenty-four pages. A second edition was published in 1644, and the third in 1659, with the fifth edition of the work which it professed to criticize, and to which it has in every succeeding edition been appended.

The "Religio" itself passed through eleven editions, from 1643 to 1681, in which year Sir Thomas died; but a still greater testimony to the attention it excited is to be found in the number and importance of the criticisms, translations, and imitations that followed its publication.

In 1645 appeared an attack on Browne and Digby from the pen of the famous "philosopher," Alexander Ross, who has found literary immortality in the pages of "Hudibras." His book was called "Medicus Medicatus: or the Physician's Religion cured by a lenitive or gentle Potion: with some animadversions upon Sir Kenelme Digby's Observations on Religio Medici." "Browne's too great lenity towards Papists, his too free use of 'rhetorical phrases' in religious subjects, his apparent leaning to judicial astrology and other *heresies*, and the far too measured terms in which he questioned certain opinions which Ross roundly condemns,—form," says Wilkin, "the general subject of his remarks, which, though often absurd and sometimes ludicrous, are by no means devoid either of spirit or shrewdness, though not remarkable, it must be confessed, for candour. In his animadversions on Sir Kenelm, which constitute a third of his book, he

chiefly attacks the metaphysics of the knight and his Catholicism."

A publication more favourable to Browne was the "Annotations upon all the obscure passages" in his work, appended to the fifth edition of the "Religio," in 1656, and written by a Mr. Thomas Keek, "of the Temple."

On the Continent, one of the first to express his opinion was the celebrated Guy Patin, who, in a letter dated Paris, April 7th, 1645, says, "Parlons d'autre chose. On fait icy grand état du livre intitulé 'Religio Medici.' Cet Auteur a de l'esprit. Il y a de gentilles choses dans ce livre. C'est un mélancholique agréable en ses pensées; mais qui, à mon jugement, cherche maître en fait de religion comme beaucoup d'autres, et peutêtre qu'enfin il n'en trouvera aucun. Il faut dire de luy ce que Philippe de Comines a dit du fondateur des Minimes, l'Hermite de Calabre, Francois de Paule, *Il est encore en vie, il peut aussi bien empirer qu'amander.*" That is, "Let us speak of something else. The book called 'Religio Medici' is in high favour here. The author has wit, and there are some fine things in his book. There is an agreeable melancholy in his thoughts; but, in my opinion, he, like many others, is searching for a master in religion, and perhaps may find none. We must say of him what Philip de Comines said of the founder of the Minimes, a hermit of Calabria, Francis de Paule, *He is still alive, and may grow worse as well as better.*"

Some of the German critics so far misunderstood the book as to call the author an atheist; but, on the other hand, Herman Conringius was wont to say, that

he always read "Religio Medici" with fresh delight; and in respect to that imputation of atheism, or indifferency in religion, which had been circulated with such industry by supercilious critics, he exclaims, "Utinam nemo Medicorum, imo Theologicorum, illo homine sit minus religiosus!" In the same way, Frederick Heister, son of the celebrated Laurentius Heister, thought himself obliged, on Budaeus' publication of his theses, to vindicate physicians in general, and Sir Thomas Browne in particular, from the aspersions cast upon them in that work.*

It is scarcely possible to account for the various and conflicting rumours which the "Religio" raised concerning the persuasion of its author. It was regarded by different people as the production, not only of an atheist, but of a Romanist, and of a Quaker, though nothing can be more distinct than Browne's assertion, which I shall presently quote, to the effect that he was a member of the Church of England. That the Church of Rome, in the person of its highest authority, did not consider Browne within her pale, is evident from the fact that the "Religio" figured as one of the books condemned by the Papacy in the famous "Index Expurgatorius."

A Latin translation, by John Merryweather, appeared at Leyden in 1644; a Dutch version issued from the same city in 1665. It was published in French in 1668, and in German in 1746.

The imitations may be briefly noticed:—†

* See his "Apologia pro Medicis."

† See Mr. Wilkin's preface to his edition of the "Religio Medici" (Bohn); also Lowndes's "Bibliographer's Manual."

1. "De Religione Laici," published by Lord Herbert in 1645, and intended to prove that ordinary people can never attain to any certainty in religious truth, and that they had, therefore, better be contented with so much as his lordship had marked out for them in his treatise, "De Veritate."

2. "De Religione Gentilium," by the same writer, appeared in 1665, and was written to prove that his five leading principles of Natural Religion were inscribed by the Almighty on the minds of men, and had been universally acknowledged from the earliest times.

3. "Religio Jurisconsultis," published in 1649.

4. "Medici Catholicon," published in 1657.

5. "Religio Philosophi Peripatetici," published by Christopher Davenport in 1662, and written on the occasion of a miracle said to have been performed by the Virgin Mary in the year 1640. "A man's leg had been amputated, and his friends, as well as himself, were one morning exceedingly surprised to find it had been restored to him, and that he had two legs instead of one. The book is written to show that this could not have happened by natural means, and that neither astrology, nor chemistry, nor melancholy, nor witchcraft, nor imagination, nor the devil himself, could do such a thing as this;—*ergo, concluditur esse miraculum.* It is a curious book, full of digressions and odd stories." Its author, a Franciscan monk, was successively chaplain to Queen Henrietta and theologist to the consort of Charles II.

6. "The Religion of a Physician, or, Divine Meditations on the Grand and Lesser Festivals," published by Edmund Gayton in 1663.

7. "Religio Stoici, with a friendly addresse to the Phanaticks of all Sects and Sorts," written by Sir George Mackenzie, and published in 1665. It was afterwards published separately under the title of "The Religious Stoic," and among the author's "Essays on several Moral Subjects." "My design," says the author, "all alongst this Discourse, butts at this one principle, that Speculations in Religion are not so necessary, and are more dangerous than sincere practice. It is in Religion as in Heraldry, the simpler the bearing be, it is so much the purer and ancienter."

8. "Religio Clerici," written by a clergyman, published in 1681, and intended to defend the Church of England against dissenters, showing "that we never shall have peaceable days, as long as bulkers and cobblers are preachers, and covenanters."

9. "Religio Laici, or a Layman's Faith," published by John Dryden in 1682. In the same year appeared—

10. "Religio Laici," by Charles Blount, who inscribes his work to Dryden, and says, "I have endeavoured that my discourse shall be only a continuance of yours, and that, as you taught men how to believe, so I might instruct them how to live." Leland, however, says that the treatise is little more than a translation of the first on this list, by Herbert, the additions and variations being so slight as scarcely to deserve mention.

11. "Religio Laici, or a Layman's Faith touching the supreme and infallible Guide of the Church," purports to be written by "J. R., a convert of Mr. Bayes," and is in the form of "two letters to a friend in

the country." Bayes is the name under which Dryden figures in Buckingham's burlesque of "The Rehearsal," and these letters, which are said to be "replete with the grossest insolence, brutality, and ignorance," were called forth by the poet's change of faith after the publication of *his* "Religio Laici."

12. "Religio Jurisprudentis, or the Lawyer's Advice to his Son, in Counsels, Essays, and other Miscellanies, Calculated chiefly to Prevent the Miscarriage of youth, and for the orthodox establishment of their Morals in Years of Maturity," published in 1685, and written, it is supposed, by a certain Mark Hildesley.

13. "Religio Militis, or the Moral Duty of a Soldier, showing how he ought to behave himself towards God, his King, and Country," published in 1690, and said to have been written by Morgan.

14. "The Layman's Religion, humbly offered as a Help to a Modest Enquiry for every Man into his own Heart, both as being the only means to judge and save himself, and the best way to unite us against our Common Enemies," published in 1690.

15. "Religio Bibliopolæ," avowedly by Benjamin Bridgewater, an M.A. of Trinity College, Cambridge, and a hack writer employed by Dunton the publisher, who speaks of him as of a "very rich genius," and "running much upon poetry." The book is really a mere compilation, only a portion being written by Bridgewater, who was indebted for most of his material to Glanvil, Howell, Norris, and Boyle. It was first published in 1694, and again in 1704, with the following sub-title: "The New Practice of Piety, writ in imitation of Dr. Browne's 'Religio Medici,' or the

Christian Virtuoso, discovering the right way to Heaven between all Extremes."

16. "Evangelium Medici," published by Bernardo Conner in 1697, and "a work of very curious speculation, though not properly an imitation of 'Religio Medici.' The most extraordinary part is that in which he considers the resurrection, and how it is to be accomplished. He goes through the different parts of the body, and decides which will and which will not find a place in our bodies when glorified."

17. "The Religion of a Prince, showing that the precepts of the Holy Scriptures are the best Maxims of Government," written by a Dr. Nichols against the tenets of Hobbes, Machiavelli, and others, and published in 1704.

18. "A Gentleman's Religion, in three Parts," by Edward Synge, D.D., Archbishop of Tuam, forming volume five of his "Works." The first edition was published anonymously in 1698, and the last at the Clarendon Press, Oxford, in 1800. The first part treats of the principles of Natural Religion; the second and third, of the Doctrines of Christianity, both as to faith and practice.

19. "Religio Libertini," published in 1715.

20. "The Religion of the Wits at Button's refuted, &c., in a Dialogue between a Politician and a Divine;" published in 1716, and consisting of an attack on the infidel wits of the day.

21. "A Lady's Religion," published in 1748.

22. "Religio Philosophi, or the Principles of Morality and Christianity illustrated from a View of the Universe, and of Man's Situation on it;" published in

1753 by William Hay, who, in a brief preface, says the object of his book is "to fix religion on a firm basis, by rectifying men's ideas, and by removing vulgar prejudices."

23. "Religio Laici," published by Stephen Tempest in 1768, and described as "the very sensible tract of a very sensible country gentleman."

24. "Fragmentum Isaaci Hawkins Browne, Arm. Sive Ante-Bolingbrokius, Liber Primus, translated for a Second Religio Medici," by Sir William Browne, President of the College of Physicians; published in 1768.

25. "The Religion of a Lawyer, a Crazy Tale," in four cantos, analytical of the Kentish story of Brookland Steeple; published in 1786.

26. "Religio Clerici; a Churchman's Epistle;" a poem written by the Rev. E. Smedley in reply to the question, "Why are you a Church of England Christian?" and published in 1818.

27. "A Churchman's Second Epistle," by the same author; published in 1819, and containing, it is said, "some good strokes of satire." "In the latter part," the author says, "he has thought it his duty to express firmly, though he hopes not uncharitably, his opinions of the perils to which the Established Church is exposed by the rapid progress of modern Puritanism." In the concluding lines, he desires to have it recorded in his epitaph that—

> "He loved established modes of serving God,
> Preached from a pulpit rather than a tub,
> And gave no guinea to a Bible club."

28. "Religio Christiani; a Churchman's Answer to Religio Clerici;" published in 1818.

29. "Religio Militis, or Christianity for the Camp;" published in 1827.

30. "The Religion of a Church of England Man;" the date unknown.

It is time, however, to turn from an enumeration of these works which, if they did not copy the method, at least parodied the title, of Sir Thomas Browne's great work, to a consideration of the contents of that work itself. I have not indeed sufficient space at my command to furnish a complete analysis of the book; but I hope, by laying before the reader some characteristic passages from it, to give him some idea of the tone and temper in which it is written, and of the weighty and valuable thoughts which it includes.

It opens with a curious testimony to the general irreligion of Sir Thomas Browne's profession, and a frank avowal of personal attachment to Christianity which ought ever to have protected him from the charge of atheism. "For my religion," he says, "though there be several circumstances that might persuade the world I have none at all—as the general scandal of my profession, the natural course of my studies, the indifferency of my behaviour and discourse in matters of religion (neither violently defending one, nor with that common ardour and contention opposing another)—yet, in despite thereof, I dare without usurpation assume the honourable style of a Christian. Not that I merely owe this title to the fact, my education, or the clime wherein I was born, as being bred up either to confirm those principles my parents instilled into my understanding, or by a general consent proceed in the religion of my country; but

having, in my riper years and confirmed judgment, seen and examined all, I find myself obliged, by the principles of grace, and the law of mine own reason, to embrace no other name but this. Neither doth herein my zeal so far make me forget the general charity I owe unto humanity, as rather to hate than pity Turks, Infidels, and (what is worse) Jews; rather contenting myself to enjoy that happy style, than maligning those who refuse so glorious a title."

The name of Christian, however, having become too general to express our faith,—"there being a geography of religion as well as lands, and every clime distinguished not only by their laws and limits, but circumscribed by their doctrines and rules of faith,"—Sir Thomas hastens to explain that he is "of that reformed new-cast religion, wherein I dislike nothing but the name; of the same belief our Saviour taught, the apostles disseminated, the fathers authorised, and the martyrs confirmed; but, by the sinister ends of princes, the ambition and avarice of prelates, and the fatal corruption of times, so decayed, impaired, and fallen from its native beauty, that it required the careful and charitable hands of these times to restore it to its native integrity."

At the same time, he cannot join with those who, in becoming Protestants, have also become rabidly intolerant of the Romish Church. "We have reformed from them," he says, "not against them; for, omitting those improper actions and terms of scurrility betwixt us, which only difference our affections, and not our cause, there is between us one common name and appellation, one faith and necessary body of principles

common to us both, and therefore I am not scrupulous to converse and live with them, to enter churches in defect of ours, and either pray with them or for them. I could never perceive any rational consequence from those many texts which prohibit the children of Israel to pollute themselves with the temples of the heathens, we being all Christians, and not divided by such detested impieties as might profane our prayers, or the place wherein we make them; or that a resolved conscience may not adore her Creator anywhere, especially in places devoted to his service; if their devotions offend Him, mine may please Him: if theirs profane it, mine may hallow it. Holy water and crucifix (dangerous to the common people) deceive not my judgment, nor abuse my devotion at all. I am, I confess, naturally inclined to that which misguided zeal terms superstition; my common conversation I do acknowledge austere, my behaviour full of rigour, sometimes not without morosity; yet, at my devotion I love to use the civility of my knees, my hat, and hand, with all those outward and sensible signs which may express and promote my invisible devotion. I should violate my own arm rather than a church; nor willingly deface the name of saint or martyr. At the sight of a cross, or a crucifix, I can dispense with my hat, but scarce with the thought or memory of my Saviour. I could laugh at, but rather pity, the fruitless journeys of pilgrims, or contemn the miserable condition of friars, for though misplaced in circumstances, there is something in it of devotion. I could never hear the Ave-Mary bell, without an elevation, or think it sufficient warrant, because they erred in one circumstance, for me to err in

all,—that is, a silence and dumb contempt. Whilst, therefore, they direct their devotions to her, I offered mine to God; and rectify the errors of their prayers by rightly ordering mine own. At a solemn procession I have wept abundantly, while my consorts, blind with opposition and prejudice, have fallen into an excess of scorn and laughter. There are, questionless, both in the Greek, Roman, and African Churches, solemnities and ceremonies, whereof the wiser zeals do make a Christian use; and stand condemned by us, not as evil in themselves, but as allurements and beds of superstition to those vulgar heads that look asquint on the face of truth, and those unstable judgments that cannot resist in the narrow point and centre of virtue without a reel or stagger to the circumference."

These are remarkable words to proceed from the mouth of a writer of the seventeenth century, and they might well be repeated, if repeated sincerely, by many of the professing Christians of the present day. They are not words which we could expect to fall from one who, like Fox, was fated to live in the midst of the great struggle between Rome and the Reformers; but lapse of time does not necessarily bring with it charity and moderation, and there are many in the nineteenth century whose horizon, even now, is not so open and extensive as that of the author of "Religio Medici."

Sir Thomas then proceeds to make the declaration to which I have already referred, and which is so distinct and decisive that one wonders how his contemporaries would have had any difficulty in assigning to him his place among the various religious bodies.

"To difference myself nearer, and draw into a lesser circle; there is no Church," he says, "whose every part so squares unto my conscience, whose articles, constitutions, and customs, seem so consonant unto reason, and, as it were, framed to my particular devotion, as this whereof I hold my belief—the Church of England; to whose faith I am a sworn subject, and therefore in a double obligation, subscribe unto her articles and endeavour to observe her constitutions: whatsoever is beyond, as points indifferent, I observe, according to the rules of my private reason, or the humour and fashion of my devotion; neither believing this because Luther affirmed it, nor disproving that because Calvin hath avouched it. I condemn not all things in the Council of Trent, nor approve all in the Synod of Dort. In brief, where the Scripture is silent, the Church is my text; where that speaks, 'tis but my comment; where there is a joint silence of both, I borrow not the rules of my religion from Rome or Geneva, but from the dictates of my own reason."

It is obvious throughout the whole of the "Religio" that Sir Thomas Browne was not one of those happily-constituted natures who, like Lord Macaulay, are so "cocksure of everything." "I could never," he says, "divide myself from any man upon the difference of an opinion, or be angry with his judgment for not agreeing with me in that from which, perhaps, within a few days, I should dissent myself." He seems to have been pre-eminently one of those whose minds were continually open to receive new impressions, and to whom no conviction was so dear that time and fresh knowledge could not successfully dis-

lodge it. In the preface to the "Religio," he is careful to point out that "it was set down many years past, and was the sense of my conceptions at that time, not an immutable law unto my advancing judgment at all times; and therefore there might be many things therein plausible unto my passed apprehension, which are not agreeable unto my present self. There are many things delivered rhetorically, many expressions therein merely tropical, and as they best illustrate my intention; and therefore also there are many things to be taken in a soft and flexible sense, and not to be called unto the rigid test of reason. Lastly, all that is contained therein is in submission unto maturer discernments; and, as I have declared, shall no farther father them than the best and most learned judgments shall authorise them."

Nothing could well be more modest—and, therefore, more worthy of a man of true culture—than this declaration. The allusion to the rhetorical and tropical expressions with which his work abounds sufficiently blunts the edge of any adverse criticism in that direction; and, for the rest, it is clear that Sir Thomas had no genius, as he says, for disputes, whether in religion or in philosophy, and that he had, as Lord Lytton has ably pointed out, a good deal of the poet in his nature. The time was one in which fact and fiction, the real and the ideal, were strangely mingled by the foremost writers, and the "Religio" evidently contains much that it would not do to bring too closely to the test of logic. Lord Lytton, indeed, calls it, if I remember rightly, one of the greatest prose poems in the language.

If, however, Sir Thomas permitted himself wide scope for speculation in philosophy, he assures us that in divinity he loved to keep the road, and, though not in an implicit, yet in an humble faith, follow the great wheel of the Church, by which he moved, not reserving any proper poles, or motion from the epicycle of his own brain. By this means he had no gap for heresy, schisms, or errors, of which, at present, he hoped he should not injure truth to say, he had no taint or tincture. Yet he confessed that his greener studies had been polluted by two or three; the first being that of the Arabians, "that the souls of men perished with their bodies, but should yet be raised again at the last day: not that I did absolutely conceive a mortality of the soul, but, if that were (which faith, not philosophy, hath yet thoroughly disproved), and that both entered the grave together, yet I held the same conceit there that we all do of the body, that it rise again. Surely it is but the merits of our unworthy natures, if we sleep in darkness until the last alarms. A serious reflex upon my own unworthiness did make me backward from challenging this prerogative of my soul: so that I might enjoy my Saviour at the last, I could with patience be nothing almost unto eternity."

His second heresy, he says, was that of Origen; "that God would not persist in his vengeance for ever, but, after a definite time of his wrath, would release the damned souls from torture, which error I fell into upon a serious contemplation of the great attribute of God, his mercy; and did a little cherish it in myself, because I found therein no malice, and a ready weight to sway me from the other extreme of despair, where-

unto melancholy and contemplative natures are too easily disposed."

His third heresy, which he says he never positively maintained or practised, but often wished was consonant to truth and not offensive to his religion, was prayer for the dead, whereunto he was inclined from some charitable inducements, whereby he could scarcely contain his prayers for a friend at the ringing of a bell, or behold his corpse without an orison for his soul. "'Twas a good way, methought, to be remembered by posterity, and far more noble than a history."

But though he held these opinions, he did not maintain them with pertinacity, the first and second any more than the third. He never endeavoured to inveigle any man's belief unto his; he did not so much as reveal them to, or dispute them with, his dearest friends. "By which means," he says, "I neither propagated them in others nor confined them in myself: but, suffering them to flame upon their own substance, without addition of new fuel, they went out insensibly of themselves; therefore these opinions, though condemned by lawful councils, were not heresies in me, but bare errors, and single lapses of my understanding, without a joint depravity of my will."

He says it is only those who have depraved understandings and diseased affections who cannot enjoy a singularity without a heresy, or be the authors of an opinion without being the founders of a sect. He seems to have seen very clearly the dangers of sectarianism. He saw that "there must be heresies

not only in our Church, but also in any other; even in the doctrines heretical there will be superheresies; and Arians, not only divided from the church, but also among themselves; for heads that are disposed unto schism, and complexionally prepense to innovation, are naturally indisposed for a community; nor will be ever confined unto the order or economy of one body; and therefore, when they separate from others, they knit but loosely among themselves; nor contented with a general breach, or dichotomy with their church do subdivide and mince themselves almost into atoms." At the same time, he held it to be quite possible that a man should hold opinions which were not altogether approved of by the Church to which he belonged. "Men of singular parts and humours have not been free," he says, "from singular opinions and conceits in all ages, retaining something, not only beside the opinion of his own Church, or any other, but also any particular author; which, notwithstanding, a sober judgment may do without offence or heresy; for there is yet, after all the decrees of councils, and the niceties of the schools, many things, untouched, unimagined, wherein the liberty of an honest man may play and expatiate with security, and far without the circle of a heresy."

Sir Thomas, on his part, seems to have been glad of any opportunities for exercising his abundant faith. He complains that there are not half enough impossibilities in religion, and that the deepest mysteries ours contains have not only been illustrated, but maintained, by syllogism and the rule of reason. He loved to lose himself in mystery and to "pose" his "apprehension"

with "those involved enigmas and riddles of the Trinity —with incarnation and resurrection. I can answer," he says, "all the objections of Satan and my rebellious reason with that odd resolution I learned of Tertullian, '*Certum est quia impossibile est.*' I desire to exercise my faith upon the difficultest point; for, to credit ordinary and visible objects, is not faith, but persuasion. Some believe the better for seeing Christ's sepulchre; and, when they have seen the Red Sea, doubt not of the miracle." Of such men the mental attitude is well described by Mr. Arnold in one of his finest poems, where Obermann is represented as saying that if he had but lived in the great day of Christ, its glory would not only have filled earth and heaven, but have "carried away his ravished spirit too."

"No cloister-floor of humid stone
Had been too cold for me;
For me no Eastern desert lone
Had been too far to flee.

"No thoughts that to the world belong
Had stood against the wave
Of love which set so deep and strong
From Christ's then open grave.

"No lonely life had pass'd too slow
When I could hourly see
That wan, nail'd Form, with head dropp'd low,
Upon the bitter tree;

"Could see the Mother with the Child
Whose tender winning arts
Have to his little arms beguiled
So many wounded hearts!"

But this was not the attitude of Sir Thomas Browne. "Contrarily, I bless myself," he says, "and am thankful, that I lived not in the days of miracles; that I never saw Christ or his disciples. I would not have

been one of those Israelites that passed the Red Sea; nor one of Christ's patients, on whom He wrought his wonders: then had my faith been thrust upon me; nor should I enjoy that greater blessing pronounced to all that believe and saw not. 'Tis an easy and necessary belief to credit what our eye and sense hath believed. I believe He was dead, and buried, and rose again; and desire to see Him in his glory, rather than to contemplate Him in his cenotaph or sepulchre. Nor is this much to believe; as we have reason, we owe this faith unto history: they only had the advantage of a bold and noble faith, who lived before his coming, who, upon obscure prophecies and mystical types, could raise a belief, and expect apparent impossibilities."

Let us now hear Sir Thomas in one of the best-sustained and most powerful passages of his book; that in which he treats of God in Nature:—

"Thus," he says, "there are two books from whence I collect my divinity. Besides that written one of God, one of his servant, nature, that universal and publick manuscript, that lies expansed unto the eyes of all. Those that never saw Him in the one have discovered Him in the other: this was the Scripture and theology of the heathen; the natural motions of the sun made them more admire Him than its supernatural station did the children of Israel. The ordinary effects of nature wrought more admiration in them than, in the other, all his miracles. Surely the heathen knew better how to join and read these mystical letters than we Christians, who cast a more careless eye on these common hieroglyphics, and disdain to suck divinity from the flowers of Nature. Nor do I so forget God

as to adore the name of nature; which I define not, with the schools, to be the principle of motion and rest, but that straight and constant course the wisdom of God hath ordained the actions of his creatures, according to their several kinds. To make a revolution every day is the nature of the sun, because of the necessary course which God hath ordained it, from which it cannot swerve but by a faculty from that voice which first did give it motion. Now this course of nature God seldom alters or perverts; but like an excellent artist, hath so contrived his work, that, with the self-same instrument, without a new creation, He may effect his obscurest designs. Thus He sweeteneth the water with a word, preserveth the creatures in the ark, which the blast of his mouth might as easily have created; —for God is like a skilful geometrician, who, when more easily, and with one stroke of his compass, he might describe or divide a right line, had yet rather do this in a circle or longer way, according to the constituted and forelaid principles of his art: yet this rule of his He doth sometimes pervert, to acquaint the world with his prerogative, lest the arrogancy of our reason should question his power, and conclude he could not. And thus I call the effects of nature the works of God, whose hand and instrument she only is; and therefore, to ascribe his actions unto her is to devolve the honour of the principal agent upon the instrument; which if with reason we may do, then let our hammers rise up and boast they have built our houses, and our pens receive the honour of our writing. I hold there is a general beauty in the works of God, and therefore no deformity in any kind of species of creature whatever.

I cannot tell by what logick we call a toad, a bear, or an elephant ugly; they being created in those outward shapes and figures which best express the actions of their inward forms; and having passed that general visitation of God, who saw that all that He had made was good, that is, conformable to his will, which abhors deformity, and is the rule of order and beauty. There is no deformity but in monstrosity, wherein, notwithstanding, there is a kind of beauty; nature so ingeniously contriving the irregular parts, as they become sometimes more remarkable than the principal fabrick. To speak yet more narrowly, there was never anything ugly or mis-shapen, but the chaos; wherein, notwithstanding, to speak rightly, there was no deformity, because no form; nor was it yet pregnant by the voice of God. Now nature is not at variance with art, nor art with nature, they being both the servants of his providence. Art is the perfection of nature. Were the world now as it was the sixth day, there was yet chaos. Nature hath made one world, and art another. In brief, all things are artificial; for nature is the art of God."

I have already referred to a criticism on Sir Thomas Browne which the reader will find in Lord Lytton's "Miscellaneous Works." Hazlitt also devotes a portion of one of his lectures on "Elizabethan Literature" to a discussion of the characteristics of Browne's writings, in the course of which he quotes an interesting, but on the whole inadequate, estimate of our author by Samuel Taylor Coleridge. More calm, more dispassionate, though not less depreciatory, are the views expressed by Hallam in his "Introduction to the

Literature of Europe," where he says, "The mind of Browne was fertile, and, according to the correct use of the word, ingenious; his analogies are original, and sometimes brilliant; and as his learning is also in some things out of the beaten path, this gives a peculiar and uncommon air to his writings, and especially to the 'Religio Medici.' He was, however, far removed from philosophy, both by his turn of mind, and by the nature of his erudition; he seldom reasons, his thoughts are desultory, sometimes he appears sceptical or paradoxical, but credulity and deference to authority prevail. He belonged to the class, numerous at that time in our Church, who halted between Popery and Protestantism; and this gives him, on all such topics, an appearance of vacillation and irresoluteness which probably represents the real state of his mind. His paradoxes do not seem very original, nor does he arrive at them by any process of argument; they are more like traces of his reading casually suggesting themselves, and supported by his own ingenuity. His style is not flowing, but vigorous; his choice of words not elegant, and even approaching to barbarism as English phrase; yet there is an impressiveness, an air of reflection and sincerity in Browne's writings, which redeem many of their faults. His egotism is equal to that of Montaigne, but with this difference, that it is the egotism of a melancholy mind, which generally becomes displeasing. This melancholy temperament is characteristic of Browne. 'Let's talk of graves and worms and epitaphs' seems his motto. His best-written work, the 'Hydrotaphia,' is expressly an essay on sepulchral urns; but the same taste for the cir-

cumstances of mortality leavens also the 'Religio Medici.'"

To be sure the general tendency of Browne's mind was towards a melancholy view of life and nature; his thoughts are certainly desultory, they are frequently paradoxical, and deference to authority generally prevails over his most sceptical suggestions. But I cannot admit that, on the whole, this estimate of his genius is a fair one, calm and dispassionate as it is; and that it is not so, I venture to think I have sufficiently demonstrated in the foregoing pages.

It now only remains to me to sketch very rapidly the latter years of his life.

After the publication of the "Religio Medici," he settled in Norwich, and commenced to practice there as a physician. In 1637 he was incorporated Doctor of Medicine at Oxford, and in 1641 he married Dorothy, daughter of Edward Milcham, Esq., of Burlingham, Norfolk, by whom he had a family of eleven children. "This marriage," Johnson thinks, "could not but draw the raillery of contemporary wits upon a man who had just been wishing, in his new book, 'that we might procreate, like trees, without conjunction,' and had lately declared that 'the whole world was made for man, but only the twelfth part of man for woman,' and that 'man is the whole world, but woman only the rib or crooked part of man.'" Surely it will be sufficient to regard these as some of those tropical or rhetorical expressions against which Browne was so anxious to warn his readers.

In 1646 he published his "Pseudodoxia Epidemica; or, Enquiries into very many received Tenets, com-

monly presumed Truths, which examined prove but Vulgar and Common Errors;" a work which would require a chapter to do it the barest justice, and which was received, like its predecessor, with great applause, being immediately translated into Dutch and German, and, by-and-by, into French. It had also the honour of being criticized by Alexander Ross. It is divided into four books, the first of which contains "the general part;" the second, "beginning the particular part, Of popular and received tenets concerning mineral and vegetable bodies;" the third, "the particular part continued, Of popular and received tenets concerning animals;" and the fourth, "the particular part continued, Of many popular and received tenets concerning man." A brief analysis of the latter will serve to show the general character of the work. Chapter i. is devoted to the proposition, "that only man hath an erect figure;" chapter ii., "that the heart is on the left side;" chapter iii., "that pleurisies are only on the left side;" chapter iv., "of the ring finger;" chapter v., "of the right and left hand;" chapter vi., "on swimming and floating;" chapter vii., "that men weigh heavier dead than alive, and before meat than after;" chapter viii., "that there are several passages for meat and drink;" chapter ix., "on saluting upon sneezing;" chapter x., "that Jews stink;" chapter xi., "of pigmies;" chapter xii., "of the great climacterical year, that is, sixty-three;" and chapter xiii., "of the canicular or dog-days." The book had evidently been the result of many years' labour, and is a curious monument to the industry and originality of the writer.

It was followed in 1658 by a treatise, entitled "Hydrotaphia: Urn Burial; or, a Discourse on the Sepulchral Urns lately found in Norfolk." This, it will have been observed, is considered by Hallam to be Browne's best-written work. "There is none, perhaps," says Johnson, "which better exemplifies his reading or memory. It is, indeed, like other treatises of antiquity, rather for curiosity than use; for it is of small importance to know which nation buried their dead in the ground, which threw them into the sea, or which gave them to birds or beasts; when the practice of cremation began, or when it was disused; whether the bones of different persons were mingled in the same urn; what oblations were thrown into the pyre; or how the ashes of the body were distinguished from those of other substances." What renders the "Hydrotaphia" valuable is not, of course, disquisitions on such questions as these, but the lofty imagination which presides over the whole discourse, producing passages of the finest moral beauty.

Of the remainder of Browne's works I shall only briefly speak. The "Garden of Cyrus, or the Quincunxcial Lozenge of the Ancients," is more curious than valuable, from a literary point of view, and will be remembered entirely for the ingenuity with which the author works out a ridiculous and unnecessary proposition. The "Letter to a Friend" concludes with a passage which may be taken as a sample of its general character. "Lastly, if length of days be thy portion, make it not thy expectation. Reckon not upon long life; but lie always beyond thy account. He that so often surviveth his expectation lives many lives, and will

scarce complain of the shortness of his days. Time past is gone like a shadow; make times to come present; conceive that near which may be far off. Approximate thy latter times by present appearances of them; be like a neighbour unto death, and think there is but little to come. And since there is something in us that must still live on, join both lives together, unite them in thy thoughts and actions, and live in one but for the other. He who thus ordereth the purposes of this life, will never be far from the next, and is in some manner already in it, by a happy conformity and close apprehension of it."

With this characteristic bit of moral reflection, I may well close this notice of the author of "Religio Medici," merely adding that he breathed his last on his seventy-sixth birthday, the 19th of October, 1682.

PEPYS' "DIARY."

It is now rather more than half a century since it was discovered, by the merest accident, that Mr. Samuel Pepys, for many years Secretary to the Admiralty, and at one time President to the Royal Society, had for ten years been in the habit of recording, in the form of a diary, the minutest incidents of his every-day life. Up to that time, his reputation had been somewhat of a serious character. He had been regarded as a hard-working official, a scientific discoverer, and an accomplished member of society. It was recorded that the administration of the Admiralty under his *régime* was considered a model for order and economy:* and few suspected that there lay hidden among the manuscripts of the Pepysian library a composition which, besides being of the highest historical interest, exhibited its author in quite another and more familiar light than that in which he had hitherto been remembered. Now, it is not too much to say, the parliamentary, official, and scientific career of Pepys is of little importance to the world at large in comparison with the interest which no one can fail to feel in the

* Hume, "History of England," c. lxxi.

entertaining pages of his diary. The autobiography of the least famous individual is always amusing and instructive to the student of human nature; but that of Pepys, though it extends over but a small portion of his career, is so wonderfully characteristic of the writer, is so complete in its self-revelation, is so particular in its references, that it has a charm for the modern, and especially the English, reader, which does not attach even to the autobiographic utterances of Montaigne or Rousseau.

For undoubtedly the chief interest that attaches to the Diary of Pepys, is that which arises from his own self-portraiture. Its historical value I shall come to presently. In the meantime, it is the man Pepys who appears first and foremost in his lively pages, and whose idiosyncracies we love to notice. And it is well to remember that he was not destined from the circumstances of his birth to mix in the high society which he afterwards frequented. His biographer, Lord Braybrooke, says he was descended from a younger branch of the ancient family of Pepys, who settled at Cottenham, in Cambridgeshire, early in the sixteenth century, and are represented in Blomefield's "History of Norfolk" to have been previously seated at Diss, in that county. But he himself did not believe that his family was ever considerable;* and certainly, whatever else may be brought against him, he cannot be accused of pretending to an exalted ancestry. His father, John, was a citizen of London, where he followed, we are told, the trade of tailor till the year 1600. In that year he retired to Brampton, near

* "Diary," Feb. 10, 1661-2.

Huntingdon, where he had inherited a small property from an elder brother, and where, according to the best authorities,* his son Samuel was born in 1632-3. Of Mrs. Pepys, all that we know is that her name was Margaret, and that she died in 1666-7.

Pepys had, however, the advantage of a university education. He received the rudiments of instruction at a school in Huntingdon, went from thence to St. Paul's School, London, and in 1650 had his name placed as a sizer on the books of Trinity College, Cambridge. But, before commencing residence, he removed to Magdalen College, where he was elected to one of Mr. Spendluffe's scholarships, and in 1651 preferred to one of Dr. Smith's foundation. Of his further progress in scholastic life we are not informed, except so far as may be judged from the memorandum in the registrar's books, which relates how, on October 21, 1653, "Pepys and Hind were solemnly admonished" by the registrar and a Mr. Hill "for having been scandalously overserved with drink ye night before." In this, perhaps, one may detect the foreshadowing of a tendency towards "cakes and ale," which, in the Diary, seems to have grown into a decided habit.

In December, 1655, Pepys married Elizabeth St. Michel, a native of Somersetshire, of whom it is recorded that her father was of good family, and her mother descended from the Cliffords of Cumberland, though Lord Braybrooke assures us there is no evidence to support the latter statement. The father was certainly the son of a High Sheriff of Anjou, and was dis-

* S. Knight, author of the "Life of Dean Colet," and a relation of Pepys, says Brampton positively.

inherited on account of his conversion from Papism to Protestantism, though he so far yielded to his Papistical sympathies as to allow his wife and two daughters to be "inveigled" into a religious establishment, whence Mrs. Pepys, then only twelve or thirteen years old, and "extremely handsome," was removed to the Convent of the Ursulines, in Paris. When she left that convent in 1655, at the age of fifteen, it was to marry Samuel Pepys, by whom she was ever afterwards regarded with the most tender and, notwithstanding some slight infidelities, generally unwavering attachment.

Pepys was at this time twenty-three years of age, and as neither he nor his wife was blessed with any private fortune, they gladly accepted the offer of a home with Sir Edward Montagu, a connection of our hero, who accompanied his patron on his expedition to the Sound, and was on his return employed as a clerk in some office in the Exchequer, connected with the pay of the army.

It was at this time that he began to keep a diary, which is continued uninterruptedly from the first entry, in January 1, 1659-60, to the last, in May 31, 1669, when he was obliged, from defective vision, to discontinue his daily task. In his last entry, he says, "Up very betimes, and continued all the morning with W. Hewer, upon examining and stating my accounts, in order to the fitting myself to go abroad beyond sea, which the ill-condition of my eyes, and my neglect for a year or two, hath kept me behind-hand in, and so as to render it very difficult now, and troublesome to my mind to do it; but I this day made a satis-

factory entrance therein. Had another meeting with the Duke of York, at White Hall, on yesterday's work, and made a good advance; and so, being called by my wife, we to the Park, Mary Batelier, and a Dutch gentleman, a friend of hers, being with us. Thence to 'The World's End,' a drinking-house by the Park; and there merry, and so home." Then follows the epilogue: "And thus ends all that I doubt I shall be ever able to do with my own eyes in the keeping of my Journal, I being not able to do it any longer, having done now so long as to undo my eyes almost every time that I take a pen in my hand; and, therefore, whatever comes of it, I must forbear; and, therefore, resolve, from this time forward, to have it kept by my people in long-hand, and must be contented to set down no more than is fit for them and all the world to know; or, if there be anything, I must endeavour to keep a margin in my book open, to add, here and there, a note in short-hand with my own hand. And so I betake myself to that course, which is almost as much as to see myself go into my grave: for which, and all the discomforts that will accompany my being blind, the good God prepare me!" There was no need, however, for any such gloomy prognostication. Pepys was happily able to obtain a few months' leave of absence from his duty, and his tour through France and Holland probably strengthened his sight, which remained unimpaired during the remainder of his life.

That his Diary, as originally written, contained a good deal of matter which it was advisable to hide under the cover of short-hand, is sufficiently obvious

from the fact that when it was deciphered* and published in 1815, the editor intimated that it had been found "absolutely necessary" to make numerous curtailments. As it is, the Diary is very free in its details, though it has none of the full descriptions of Court profligacy which make the Memoirs of the Comte de Grammont such very questionable reading.

"If," says Leigh Hunt,† "we picture to ourselves Pepys practising his song of 'Beauty, retire' the first thing in the morning, then breakfasting and going to his duties, working hard at them, fretting at corruptions, yet once and away helping to patch up one himself; then taking a turn in the Park, to see and be seen in his new camlet; loving the very impudence of Lady Castlemaine,‡ yet shaking his head about her; talking with some gossip of the last doings at Court; cheapening an old book on a stall, or giving his money away; then dining and going to the theatre, or to the house of some jovial friend, and playing 'high jinks' till supper; then supping considerably, and again going to work, perhaps till one or two in the morning; and, finally, saying his prayers, and thinking his wife positively half as pretty as Miss Mercer, or my lady herself—if we take, we say, a dioramic view of him after this fashion, by way of specimen of his working hours, we shall have a tolerably accurate sample of the stuff his life was made of during its best

*. By Mr. John Smith, afterwards Rector of Baldock, Herts. The cipher employed by Pepys appears to resemble that which, under the name of "Rich's system," was at one time in regular use in Nonconformist academies.

† "Men, Women, and Books."

‡ One of the mistresses of Charles II.

period, and till infirmity and his public consequence rendered him more thoughtful and dignified."

His rise in the public service seems to have been remarkably rapid, though, as far as can be ascertained, it was not more rapid than he deserved. It so happened that he commenced his Diary just before the Restoration, and therefore one of the first things he has to record is his appointment as secretary to the two generals of the fleet, and his journey to Scheeling, on board the flag-ship of his patron, to bring home Charles II. to his faithful subjects. Sir Edward Montagu being afterwards created Earl of Manchester, Keeper of the Great Wardrobe and Clerk of the Privy Seal, it was natural that his kinsman should benefit in proportion, and accordingly we find Pepys nominated Clerk of the Acts of the Navy, entering on his duties in June, 1660, and residing in a house belonging to the Navy Office in Seething Lane. In the prosecution of the duties of his position, he seems to have been everything that could be desired. Leigh Hunt certainly insinuates that he helped to patch up some of the prevailing corruptions; but, on the other hand, Lord Braybrooke assures us that he laboured unceasingly for the good of the service, and endeavoured to check the rapacity of the contractors by whom the naval stores were then supplied. He strenuously advocated, it is said, the promotion of the old-established officers of the navy, striving to counteract the undue influence exercised by the Court minions; and he discountenanced the open system of selling places, which was practised in the most unblushing manner in every department of the State. During the Dutch war of

1664, his energies were severely taxed in his endeavours to promote the efficiency of our marine; and during the plague of 1665, when the metropolis was deserted and every branch of the service completely abandoned, the whole management of the navy devolved upon him, and he remained at his post, regardless of the danger that environed him on every side. Writing to Sir W. Coventry at this juncture, he says, "The sickness in general thickens round us, and particularly upon our neighbourhood. You, sir, took your turn of the sword; I must not, therefore, grudge to take mine of the pestilence."* He was of equally great service during the Great Fire of London, when he sent up the artificers from the dockyards with orders to blow up the houses and thus arrest the flames. And when, in 1668, the officers of the Navy Board were summoned before the House of Commons to account for the disastrous results of De Ruyter's attack on Chatham, Pepys was chosen by them to speak in their defence—a task which he performed so manfully and successfully, that no further proceedings were taken against a body of men who, but for his championship, seemed likely to lose their situations on account of circumstances over which they had literally no control.†

These, then, were the leading incidents of Pepys' career during the period which is covered by the Diary. That the period was one of unusual interest will not be denied, and this in itself would be sufficient to make the Diary a work of value, quite independently

* Memoir, by Lord Braybrooke, prefixed to "Diary," ed. 1867.
† Lingard, "History of England," *in loco*.

of the personal interest attaching to it. But what is especially remarkable about this curious work is the wonderful manner in which its author manages to see and hear everything that is worth seeing and hearing, and all this amidst such a pressure of official duties as would probably have exhausted all the time and energies of a less laborious man. He seems, says Jeffrey,* "to have been possessed of the most extraordinary activity, and the most indiscriminating, insatiable, and miscellaneous curiosity, that ever prompted the researches, or supplied the pen, of a daily chronicler. He finds time to go to every play, to every execution, to every procession, fire, concert, riot, trial, review, city feast, public dissection, or picture gallery that he can hear of. Nay, there seems scarcely to have been a school examination, a wedding, christening, charity sermon, bull-baiting, philosophical meeting, or private merry-making in his neighbourhood, at which he is not sure to make his appearance, and mindful to record all the particulars. He is the first to hear all the Court scandal, and all the public news—to observe the changes of fashion, and the downfall of parties—to pick up family gossip, and to retail philosophical intelligence—to criticize every new house or carriage that is built—every new book or new beauty that appears—every measure the king adopts, and every mistress he discards."

It is not necessary to follow Jeffrey in his detailed analysis of the character of the unfortunate diarist, whose inmost thoughts and feelings have been brought to light by the discovery of this secret record. Granted

* Contributions to the "Edinburgh Review," No. 226.

that the Diary exhibits his "almost ludicrous admiration of his wife, with a wonderful devotion to the king's mistresses, and the fair sex in general, and a rather suspicious familiarity with various pretty actresses and singers;" granted that it exhibits, "above all, a practical sagacity and cunning in the management of affairs, with so much occasional credulity, puerility, and folly, as would often tempt us to set him down for a driveller;" granted that "he appears before us, from first to last, with the true temper, habits, and manners of an *underling*—obsequious to his superiors—civil and smooth to all men—lavish in attentions to persons of influence whom he dislikes—and afraid and ashamed of being seen with his best friends and benefactors, when they are supposed to be out of favour—most solicitous to keep out of quarrels of all sorts—and ensuring his own safety, not only by too humble and pacific a bearing in scenes of contention, but by such stretches of simulation and dissimulation, as we cannot easily reconcile to our notion of a brave and honourable man." I am not concerned to imitate the conduct of so many modern biographers, and to attempt the whitewashing of my present hero. But I would suggest that the courts of Charles II. and James II. were scarcely favourable to the growth of noble characters; that it was hardly possible for a man in Pepys' position to behave towards his neighbours otherwise than he is represented as doing by Lord Jeffrey; and that, above all, few men have bequeathed to posterity such ample materials for passing judgment upon his acts and thoughts. It seems hardly fair to drag to light a private Diary, such

as that of Pepys' was obviously intended to be, and then to brand its unsuspecting author with such epithets as those used by the Edinburgh Reviewer.

However, *there* is the Diary; and it must be confessed that its perusal, whilst in one sense it raises, in another undoubtedly lowers, our estimate of the famous writer. He certainly was *not* a noble character. Perhaps, if he had been, his self-portraiture would not have been so entertaining; and certainly no one but a man of "indiscriminate, insatiable, and miscellaneous curiosity" could possibly have accumulated such an enormous mass of conglomerate and minute detail. Here, again, the Book is decidedly of the Man. No one else could have written it; like the Diary of H. Crabb Robinson, which, however, differs from it in many important respects, it is unique of its kind. It is so perfectly honest. It is so delightfully incongruous. The most trivial and the most striking matters are set side by side with such an apparent ignorance of their relative importance.

It is especially characteristic of its writer, that the very first entry in the Diary should contain one of those references to his personal wardrobe which are so common in this amusing work. "This morning," he says, "(we living lately in the garret), I rose, put on my suit with great skirts, having not lately worn any other clothes but them. Went to Mr. Gunning's Chapel at Exeter House, when he made a very good sermon upon these words:—'That in the fullness of time God sent his Son, made of a woman,' etc.; showing, that by 'made under the law' is meant the circumcision, which is solemnized this day. Dined at

home in the garret, where my wife dressed the remains of a turkey, and in the doing of it she burned her hand. I staid at home the whole afternoon, looking over my accounts; then went with my wife to my father's, and in going observed the great posts which the City workmen set up at the Conduit in Fleet Street." This is on the 1st of January. On the 2nd he notes: "Walked a great while in Westminster Hall, where I heard that Lambert was coming up to London; that my Lord Fairfax was in the head of the Irish brigade, but it was not certain what he would declare for. The House was to-day upon finishing the act for the Council of State, which they did; and for the indemnity to the soldiers; and were to sit again thereupon in the afternoon. Great talk that many places had declared for a free Parliament; and it is believed that they will be forced to fill up the House with the old members. From the Hall I called at home, and so went to Mr. Crewe's; (my wife she was to go to her father's) and Mr. Moore and I and another gentleman went out and drank a cup of ale together in the new market, and there I eat some bread and cheese for my dinner." In these two short consecutive extracts, we have an admirable sample of the contents of the whole book. In the small space of some thirty lines, we have references to the writer's suit of clothes, to a sermon, to the dressing of a turkey, to the burning of Mrs. Pepys' hand, to Pepys' accounts, to the posts set up by the workmen in Fleet Street, to several matters of State interest, and to a cup of ale and some bread and cheese which Pepys enjoyed in the market. Nothing could be more miscellaneous; nothing could be

more natural in the private jottings of a busy man of the world to whom nothing was too insignificant for observation. It may seem to some a pity that so much that is valuable should be mingled with so much more that is twaddle; but Pepys' Diary, to be of any value or interest at all, must be taken as it is, and could not, indeed, be otherwise. It is interesting and valuable simply because it *does* intermingle, in the funniest way, the great with the little, the imperial with the personal concerns.

Let me, however, bring together some of Pepys' more amusing references to his attire. They are not so far apart as to require any considerable research. Thus, on the 2nd of the month, he says: "This day I put on my new silk suit, the first that ever I wore in my life;" [and, therefore, all the more worthy of being put on record!] On the 13th: "Up early, the first day that I put on my black camlett coat with silver buttons." On the 14th: "To the Privy Seale, and thence to my Lord's, where Mr. Pim the tailor and I agreed upon making me a velvet coat." On the 25th: "This night W. Hewer brought me home from Mr. Pim's my velvett coat and cap, the first that ever I had." On the 22nd of another month: "This morning, hearing that the Queene grows worse again, I sent to stop the making of my velvett cloak, till I see whether she lives or dies." On the 30th: "To my great sorrow find myself £43 worse than I was the last month, which was then £760, and now it is but £717. But it hath chiefly arisen from my layings out in clothes for myself and wife, viz.: for her about £12, and for myself £55, or thereabouts"

[observe the disproportion !] ; "having made myself a velvett cloak, two new cloth skirts, black, plain both ; a new shag gown, trimmed with gold buttons and twist, with a new hat, and silk tops for my legs, and many other things, being resolved henceforward to go like myself. And also two perriwigs, one whereof costs me £3 and the other 40*s*. I have worn neither yet, but will begin next week, God willing." On the 29th : "Lord's Day. This morning I put on my best black cloth suit, trimmed with scarlett ribbon, very neat, with my cloak lined with velvett, and a new beaver, which altogether is very noble, with my black silk knit canons I bought a month ago." On the 30th : "Up, and put on a bombazin suit ; and being come now to an agreement with my barber to keep my perriwigg in good order at 20*s*. a year, I am like to go very spruce, more than I used to do." Lastly, on the 31st : "This day I got a little rent in my new fine camlett cloak with the latch of Sir G. Carteret's door ; but it is darned up at my tailor's, that it will be no great blemish to it ; but it troubled me."

Perhaps much of this extreme regard for clothing may be accounted for by the trade of Pepys' father, which may have accustomed the young man to think a good deal about dress. But more, no doubt, is owing to the improvement which about this time took place in Pepys' prospects and position, rendering him more anxious than he would be otherwise to look well among his aristocratic companions. That, as a rule, he was not too ready to expend his money is noticeable in one of the passages I have quoted ; and that he invariably kept a sharp look-out upon his gains, an-

losses will be seen from the retrospect which we find him taking at the close of 1666. "To my accounts," he says, "wherein at last I find them clear and right; but to my great discontent do find that my gettings this year have been £573 less than my last: it being this year in all but £2,986; whereas the last year I got £3,560. And then again, my spendings this year have exceeded my spendings the last by £644; my whole spendings last year being but £509; whereas this year it appears I have spent £1,154,—which is a sum not fit to be said that ever I should spend in one year, before I am a master of a better estate than I am. Yet, blessed be God! and I pray God make me thankful for it, I do find myself worth in money, all good, above £6,200; which is above £1,800 more than I was the last year." On the whole, therefore, our friend Pepys had not much to complain of; but it must be confessed he was not of a contented nature, and he does not seem to have been of a very generous disposition. He records how, on the 29th, the King's birthday, he rose early and put six spoons and a porringer of silver in his pocket, to give away to a certain child who was to be his godson. He went back to dinner at Sir William Batten's; and then, after a walk in the fine gardens, he went to Mrs. Brown's, where Sir W. Pen and he were godfathers, and Mrs. Jordan and Shipman godmothers of her boy. "And there, before and after the christening, we were with the woman above in her chamber; and whether we carried ourselves well or ill I know not; but I was directed by young Mrs. Batten. One passage, of a lady that eate wafers with her dog, did a little displease me. I did

give the midwife 10*s*., and the nurse 5*s*., and the maid of the house 2*s*. But, for as much as I expected to give the name to the childe but did not (it being called John), I forebore then .to give my plate." And therefore the poor boy not only lost the six spoons and the porringer, but forfeited the inestimable opportunity of being christened Samuel!

Nothing is more clear throughout the Diary than that Pepys not only waxed rich in offices but in income, and that his position at the Admiralty and elsewhere admitted him into the best society. Sometimes, indeed, he was permitted to entertain at his own house some of the great people of the Court; and I quote his description of two fashionable dinners which he appears to have given, and which he seems to have regarded, says Lord Jeffrey, as matters of very weighty concernment. Thus: "My head being full of to-morrow's dinner, went to my Lord Crewe's, there to invite Sir Thomas, etc. Thence home; and there find one laying of my napkins against to-morrow in figures of all sorts, which is mighty pretty; and it seems it is his trade, and he gets much money by it." On the 14th: "Up very betimes, and with Jane to Levett's, there to conclude upon our dinner; and thence to the pewterer's to buy a pewter sesterne, which I have ever hitherto been without. Anon comes my company, viz., my Lord Hinchinbrook and his lady, Sir Philip Cartaret and his lady, Godolphin and my cosen Roger, and Creed; and mighty merry; and by and by to dinner, which was very good and plentiful (and I should have said, and Mr. George Montagu, who came at a very little warning, which was exceedingly kind

of him). And there, among other things, my Lord had Sir Samuel Morland's late invention for casting up of sums of £ *s.* *d.*, which is very pretty, but not very useful. Most of our discourse was of my Lord Sandwich and his family, as being all of us of the family. And with extraordinary pleasure all the afternoon, thus together eating and looking over my closet."

The next dinner, says Lord Jeffrey, seems to have been still more solemn and successful. "To the office till noon, when word brought me that my Lord Sandwich was come; so I presently rose, and there I found my Lords Sandwich, Peterborough, and Sir Charles Harbord; and presently after them comes my Lord Hinchinbrook, Mr. Sidney, and Sir William Godolphin. And after greeting them, and some time spent in talk, dinner was brought up, one dish after another, but a dish at a time; but all so good! But, above all things, the variety of wines and excellent of their kind I had for them. And all in so good order, that they were mightily pleased, and myself full of content at it: and indeed it was, of a dinner of about six or eight dishes, as noble as any man need to have, I think; at least, all was done in the noblest manner that ever I had any, and I have rarely seen in my life better anywhere else, even at the Court. After dinner, my lords to cards, and the rest of us sitting about them and talking, and looking on my books and pictures, and my wife's drawings, which they commended mightily, and mighty merry all day long, with exceeding great content, and so till seven at night; and so took their leaves, it being dark and foul weather.

Thus was this entertainment over—the best of its kind and the fullest of honour and content to me that ever I had in my life; and I shall not easily have so good again."

But Pepys was reserved for still higher honours than merely entertaining a few lords and gallants. Once upon a time he was permitted to kiss a queen—a dead one, to be sure, and then to go to a play with his wife in a coach of his own! He tells the story in his own inimitable way: "To Westminster Abbey, and there did see all the tombs very finely; having one with us alone (there being no other company this day to see the tombs, it being Shrove-Tuesday); and here we did see, by particular favour, the body of Queen Katherine of Valois; and I had the upper part of her body in my hands,—and I did kiss her mouth! —reflecting upon it that I did kiss a queene, and that this was my birthday,—thirty-six years old!—that I did kiss a queene! But here this man, who seems to understand well, tells me that the saying is not true that she was never buried—for she was buried." This was on the 23rd. On the 29th, "We sat under the boxes, and saw the fine ladies; among others, my lady Kerneguy, who is most devillishly painted. And so home—it being mighty pleasant to go alone with my poor wife in a coach of our own to the play! and makes us appear mighty great, I think, in the world; at least, greater than ever I could, or my friends for me, have once expected; or, I think, than any of my family ever yet lived in my memory—but my cosen Pepys in Salisbury Court."

I should say that the proudest day in the life of

Samuel Pepys was that on which he made the speech before the House of Commons to which I have already referred. On the 1st day of that memorable March, he was "up very betimes, and by coach to Sir W. Coventry's; and there, largely carrying with me all notes and papers, did run over our whole defence. . . . in order to the answering of the House on Thursday next, and I do think," he says, "unless they be set without reason to ruin us, we shall make a good defence." Nevertheless, he "spent the evening talking with W. Hewer about business of the House, and declaring my expectation of our all being turned out." On the 2nd, "Mr. Moore was with me, and do tell me, and so W. Hewer tells me, he hears this morning that all the town is full of the discourse that the officers of the Navy shall be all turned out." On the 3rd, Pepys was "up betimes to work again, and then met at the office, where to our great business of this answer to the Parliament;" but on the 4th, he was "vexed and sickish to bed, and there slept about three hours, and then waked, and never in so much trouble in all my life of mind, thinking of the task I have upon me, and upon what dissatisfactory grounds, and what the issue of it may be to me." "With these thoughts," he says, he "lay troubling" himself till six o'clock on the morning of the 5th,—

> "The great, the important day,
> Big with the fate"

of Pepys and his friends. At last, he got his wife to comfort him and to promise that he would "quit his hands of this office, and endure the trouble no longer than he could clear himself of it." It was evident that

he was by no means sanguine of the result of his oratory, and so we find him going to the "Dog" and drinking half a pint of mulled sack, and then to the Hall at Westminster, where he drank a dram of brandy,—with the warmth of which he found himself "in better order as to courage, truly." "So we all up to the lobby, and between eleven or twelve o'clock, were called in with the mace before us, into the House, where a mighty full House, and we stood at the bar. . . . I perceive the whole House was full of expectation of our defence, what it would be, and with great prejudice. After the Speaker had told us the dissatisfaction of the House, and read the Report of the Committee, I began our defence most acceptably and smoothly, and continued at it without any hesitation or losse, but with full scope, and all my reason free about me, as if it had been at my own table, from that time till past three in the afternoon; and so ended, without any interruption from the Speaker; but we withdrew. And there all my Fellow-Officers, and all the world that was within hearing, did congratulate me, and cry up my speech as the best thing they ever heard; and my Fellow-Officers were overjoyed in it."

But this was nothing to the praises which were lavished upon him the next day, and which he takes care to record with the most minute particularity. "Up betimes, and with Sir D. Gauden to Sir W. Coventry's chamber: where the first words he said to me was, 'Good morrow, Mr. Pepys, that must be Speaker of the Parliament-House,' and did protest I had got honour for ever in Parliament. He said that

his brother,* that sat by him, admires me; and another gentleman said that I could not get less than £1,000 a-year if I would put on the gown and plead at the Chancery-bar; but what pleases me most, he tells me that the Solicitor-General† did protest that he thought I spoke the best of any man in England. . . . And by-and-by, overtaking the King, the King and the Duke of York came to me both; and he‡ said, 'Mr. Pepys, I am very glad of your success yesterday,' and fell to talk of my well speaking; and many of the lords there." Some of the members, it appears, averred that they had never heard such a speech delivered in that manner, which is susceptible of a sinister interpretation; but others assured him that they thought he might match the Solicitor-General, that he was another Cicero, that they would go twenty miles, at any time, to hear the like again, and that the kingdom would ring of his abilities. "For which," says Pepys, "the Lord God make me thankful! and that I may make use of it not to pride and vain glory, but that, now I have this esteem, I may do nothing to lessen it."

Certainly, he did nothing to increase it. He was Member of Parliament for more than one constituency in the course of his career; but he never made another speech like this one, and, indeed, he does not appear to have possessed any real oratorical power. His success on this solitary occasion was probably owing to the fact that, whereas he was completely master of his subject, the House of Commons was as completely in the dark, and was prepared to accept his statements as the purest gospel.

* Henry Coventry. † Sir Heneage Finch. ‡ The King.

Probably his contemporaries at this period of his life would have been less gracious than they were, if they had known what a terrible picture of their habits and manners he was about to bequeath to posterity. The Diary does not, as I say, contain so many scandalous descriptions as the Grammont memoirs, but it contains sufficient indications of the profligacy which infected the Court and high society in the reign of Charles II., and found so congenial a reflection in the licentious comedies of Wycherly. From these, however, I turn to notice the fulness of detail with which our author describes the circumstances of the King's arrival in England, the great fire of London, the great plague of 1666, the Dutch attack on Chatham in 1669, our ridiculous settlement at Tangier, and the various naval actions that took place in the period over which the Diary extends. On these, as upon many other subjects of somewhat less importance, Pepys gives some very curious and valuable information; among other things, it is noticeable that the circumstance of King Charles becoming a Roman Catholic upon his death-bed, related by Evelyn in *his* "Diary," rests chiefly upon the authority of Pepys, to whom King James himself communicated all the particulars of the transaction.*

For the rest, I have no space in which to enter upon a full narrative of Pepys' later life. His wife died in 1669, leaving him with no issue; and in 1673, having been chosen burgess for Castle Rising, he was unseated, for no other reason, apparently, than that he was supposed to be "a Papist, or Popishly inclined," whereas there is no reason to believe he was other-

* Lord Braybrooke, "Memoir of Pepys," *ut ante.*

wise than a faithful adherent of the Church of England.* In the same year, he was called into the service of the Duke of York as Secretary for the Affairs of the Navy; but here again he was so unfortunate as to be attacked by those who preferred to wound the Duke through his dependents. Pepys and Sir Anthony Deane were both accused (unjustly, Evelyn believed†) of sending secret information to the French, with a view to dethroning the King and extirpating the Protestant religion. They were brought to trial, sent to the Tower, and only released when it was but too obvious that the evidence against them was of an utterly untrustworthy character. At a later date Pepys accompanied the expedition to Tangier, when that possession was destroyed, to advise with the commander of the squadron, and to estimate the compensations to the householders. He was afterwards constituted Secretary for the Affairs of the Admiralty, with a salary of £500; but on the accession of William and Mary he lost his official employments, and was rejected as their representative by the electors of Harwich. "He retired consequently into private life, trusting that he should be allowed to end his days in tranquillity and the enjoyment of literary society, for which," says his biographer, "his various acquirements so peculiarly qualified him." Nevertheless, he was soon disturbed again by the virulence of his enemies, who, in June, 1690, procured his committal to the Gatehouse, upon pretence of his being too well affected

* See Burnet's "History of his Own Times," where "an honest and memorable testimony" is borne against the enemies who brought this charge on Pepys.

† See his "Diary," *in loco*.

to the exiled king; but he shortly obtained leave, on account of ill-health, to return to his own house, and there is no farther mention of the charge." In 1684, he was appointed President of the Royal Society, and after distinguishing himself for some years as a student of science and an enlightened patron of its votaries, he passed away, after a lingering illness, on May 26, 1703.

SELDEN'S "TABLE TALK."

THE "Table Talk" of Selden differs from the Table Talk of any other Englishman whose utterances have been recorded in a similar way in this particular: that it is emphatically the outcome of one who was at once a man of letters and a man of the world. It is not as if Selden had been like Sir Thomas Browne, content to remain indifferent to the course of current events, and disposed to take no part in the stirring incidents of that perfervid time. We know that Selden was a man of immense learning, that he was the author of a large number of abstruse publications, and that in his latter years he was not inclined to make any figure in the world of politics. But we know, besides, that in the heyday of his career he was one of the most conspicuous politicians of the time, that he was one of those who "thundered against tonnage and poundage on the floor of the House of Commons,"* and that he was also one of those illustrious Five Members whose history has been written so effectively by Mr. Forster.† Not only, too, was he familiar with great affairs, but

* Hannay, "Essays from the Quarterly."
† "The Arrest of the Five Members."

his great reputation admitted him to the society of the best wits of the day, with whom, however, he was well fitted to cope on their own ground, and among whom he took as high a rank as he achieved among his peers in Parliament. He was emphatically a man who lived in the highest and best life of the period in which his lot had placed him; and the result is seen in the superiority which his "Table Talk" exhibits over the "Table Talk" of his predecessors and successors. The conversations of his friend Ben Jonson are perhaps too meagrely reported by Drummond to admit of fair and equitable comparisons, but those of Dr. Johnson and of Coleridge, which have come down to us with more completeness—rich as they are in variety and suggestiveness—scarcely impress us more favourably than the slim volume which contains the "talk" of Selden. Both were more men of letters than men of the world. Neither of them lived, as Selden lived, in the main current of contemporary affairs. Yet it would appear, as Mr. Hannay admirably remarks, that to a thoroughly good talker something is required of the talents of active life. "Lord Bacon, Cicero, Burke, were all men of action. Napoleon said things which tell in history like his battles. Luther's 'Table Talk' glows with the fire which burnt the Pope's bull."

If to large experience of the world, and to wide knowledge of books, we add remarkable shrewdness of observation and a peculiar turn for humour, we have the leading qualities exhibited by Selden in his famous book. And when we remember that, after all, it does but contain "stray fragments of talk separated from the

context of casual and unrestrained conversation, collected probably without the speakers' knowledge—one, two, three at a time—over a period of twenty years,* and classified long afterwards, as seemed best to their preserver,"† we can form some idea of the inexhaustible fertility of Selden's intellect. If these were but the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, how rich and rare must have been the intellectual dishes with which that table was usually furnished! It should never be forgotten that these fragments of talk are, after all, but fragments. In the conversations recorded by Boswell, of Dr. Johnson, we have probably the cream of that remarkable man's genius; but in those of Selden, as recorded by his secretary, Millward, we have but the chips from a workshop which must have teemed with the most massive, as well as with the most light and airy, furniture of the mind and heart.

The "Table Talk" was published in 1689,‡ thirty-five years after the death of its author, and nine years after that of its recorder, who died Canon of Windsor, Rector of Great Braxstead, and Vicar of Isleworth. He had said, in his preface "to the Honourable Justice Hales,§ one of the Judges of the Common Pleas, and to the much Honoured Edward Heywood,§ John

* Probably from 1634 to 1654.

† Arber, "English Reprints—Selden."

‡ The second edition was "printed for Jacob Tonson," in 1696. Then came the editions of 1698 and 1716. That of 1786 was published with a "life of the author." That of 1789 was followed by Dr. Irving's edition of 1819. Mr. Singer's appeared in 1847, with a biographical preface and notes. Besides Mr. Arber's reprints, the "Table Talk" is now included in the "Library of Old Authors." It was also printed among Selden's other works in 1726, under the editorship of the Rev. David Wilkins.

§ Misprints for Hale and Heyward.

Vaughan, and Rowland Jewks, Esquires," "Most worthy Gentlemen, were you not Executors to that Person, who (while he lived) was the Glory of the Nation; yet I am Confident anything of his would find Acceptance with you, and truly the Sense and Notion here is wholy his, and most of the words. I had the Opportunity to hear his Discourse twenty Years together, and least all those Excellent Things that usually fell from him might be lost, some of them from time to time I faithfully committed to Writing, where here digested into this Method, I humbly present to your hands; you will quickly perceive them to be his by the familiar Illustrations wherewith they are set off, and in which way you know he was so happy, that (with a marvelous delight to those that heard him) he would presently convey the highest points of Religion, and the most important Affairs of State to an ordinary Apprehension. In reading be pleased to distinguish Times, and in your Fancy carry along with you, the When and the Why, many of these things were spoken; this will give them the more Life, and the sweeter Relish."

In these words, Millward indicates several important points which should be carefully borne in mind by those who read the "Table Talk." It must be recollected that not only is it presented in the form of fragments, but of fragments disassociated from the times and places in which they were uttered; that, though "the sense and notion here is wholly" Selden's, as well as "most of the words," yet they do not represent exactly what the speaker said, and are only to be accepted as approximations towards his actual sayings.

They were probably uttered on all sorts of occasions and at all sorts of times; but, as arranged by Millward, they appear under various headings in alphabetical order, beginning with "Abbies, Priories, etc.," and ending with "Zelots," and such cognate subjects as "clergy," "preaching," "tythes," and so on, are so far apart as to suffer extremely from the distance put between them.

The title-page runs as follows: "Table Talk: being the Discourses of John Selden, Esq.; or his Sense of Various Matters of Weight and High Consequence Relating especially to Religion and State." Religion and state are indeed the chief subjects of his discourse, and on them his opinions seem to have been firm and well-defined. "In this work, as elsewhere," says Mr. Arber, "John Selden is the Champion of Human Law. It fell to his lot to live in a time when the life of England was convulsed, for years together, beyond precedent; when men searched after the ultimate and essential conditions and frames of human society; when each strove fiercely for his rights, and then as dogmatically asserted them. Amidst immense, preposterous, and inflated assumptions; through the horrid tyranny of the system of *Thorough;* in the exciting debates of Parliament; in all the storm of the Civil War; in the still fiercer jarring of religious sects; amidst all the phenomena of that age; Selden clung to 'the Law of the Kingdom.' 'All is as the State pleases.' He advocates the supremacy of Human Law against the so-called doctrine of Divine Right. He thrusts out the Civil Power against all Ecclesiastical pretensions, and raising it to be the highest authority

in the State, denies the existence of any other co-ordinate power. So strongly does he assert the power of the Nation to do or not to do, that, for the purpose of his argument, he reduces Religion almost to a habit of thought, to be assumed or cast off, like a fashion in dress, at will. 'So Religion was brought into kingdoms, so it has been continued, and so it may be cast out, when the State pleases.' 'The Clergy tell the Prince they have Physick good for the Souls of his People, upon that he admits them: but when he finds by Experience they both trouble him and his People, he will have no more to do with them, what is that to them or any one else if a King will not go to Heaven?' 'The State still makes the Religion and receives into it, what will best agree with it.'

"Selden," continues Mr. Arber, "lodges the Civil Power of England in the King and the Parliament. He shews that our English Constitution is but one great Contract between two equal Princes, the Sovereign and the People, and that if that Contract be broken, both parties are at parity again. That, by a like consent, the majority in England governs; the minority assenting to the judgeship of the majority, and being involved in their decision. Finally, reducing all relationships to like mutual Agreements, he urges the keeping of Contracts, as the essential bond of Human society. 'Keep your Faith.'"

So much for the general tendency of the "Table Talk." When we descend to particulars, we find the fine old scholar enforcing his opinions by means of the broadest and the deepest learning, as well as by the aptest illustrations. His opening para-

graph indicates several of his most striking characteristics :—

"The unwillingness of the Monks to part with their Land, will fall out to be just nothing, because they were yielded up to the King by a Supream Hand (*viz.*), a Parliament. If a King conquer another Country, the People are loth to loose their Lands. Yet no Divine will deny, but the King may give them to whom he please. If a Parliament make a Law concerning Leather, or any other Commodity, you and I for Example are Parliament Men, perhaps in respect to our own private Interests, we are against it, yet the Major part conclude it, we are then involv'd, and the Law is good."

Here we see Selden exercising his "historical conscience," and exhibiting at once his belief in the power of the King and Parliament, with his submission to the will of the majority. Under the heading of "Baptism," he states a fact which is not so well known even at the present day as it ought to be in such an age of School-board education :—

"In the Primitive times they had God-fathers to see the Children brought up in the Christian Religion, because many times, when the Father was a Christian, the Mother was not, and sometimes when the Mother was a Christian, the Father was not, and therefore they made choice of two or more that were Christians, to see their Children brought up in that faith."

At another time, as under the heading of "Bastard," Selden gives an explanation of a text which was and is probably misunderstood by nine out of ten ordinary, unlearned readers :—

"'Tis said the 23rd of *Deuteron.* 2, [*A Bastard shall not enter into the Congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth Generation.*] *Non ingredietur in Ecclesiam Domini*, he shall not enter into the Church. The meaning of the Phrase is, he shall not marry a Jewish Woman. But upon this grosly mistaken; a Bastard at this day in the Church of *Rome*, without a Dispensation, cannot take Orders; the thing haply well enough, where 'tis so setled; but 'tis upon a mistake (the Race having no reference to the Church) appears plainly by what follows at the third Verse [*An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the Congregation of the Lord, even to the tenth Generation.*] Now you know with the Jews an Ammonite, or a Moabite could never be a Priest, because their Priests were born so, not made."

Nothing, probably, delighted Selden more than the opportunities which his scholarship afforded him of correcting errors of this kind. Whitelocke, in his "Memorials," records that "Divers Members of both Houses . . . . were Members of the Assembly of Divines, and had the same Liberty with the Divines to sit and debate, and give their Votes in any Matter which was in Consideration amongst them. In which Debates Mr. *Selden* spake admirably, and confuted divers of them in their own Learning. And sometimes when they had cited a text of Scripture to prove their Assertion, he would tell them, *Perhaps in your little Pocket Bibles with gilt Leaves* (which they would often pull out and read) *the Translation may be thus, but the* Greek *or the* Hebrew *signifies thus and thus*; and so would totally silence them."

Yet Selden was a great admirer of the Authorised Version of the Holy Scriptures :—

"The English Translation of the Bible, is," he says, "the best Translation in the World, and renders the Sense of the Original best, taking in for the English Translation, the Bishop's Bible, as well as King *James's*. The Translation in King *James's* time took an excellent way. That part of the Bible was given to him who was most excellent in such a Tongue (as the *Apocrypha* to *Andrew Downs*), and then they held together, and one read the Translation, the rest holding in their Hands some Bible, either of the learned Tongues, or *French*, *Spanish*, *Italian*, &c., if they found any Fault they spoke, if not, he read on.

"There is no Book," he adds, "so translated as the Bible for the purpose. If I translate a *French* Book into *English*, I turn it into *English* Phrase, not into *French-English* [*Il fait froid*], I say 'tis cold, not, it makes cold, but the Bible is rather translated into *English* Words, than into *English* Phrase. The Hebraisms are kept, and the Phrase of that language is kept. As for Example [He uncovered her Shame], which is well enough, so long as Scholars have to do with it; but when it comes among the Common People, Lord, what Gear do they make of it!"

It is not very clear from the "Table Talk" how far Selden was disposed to be orthodox or otherwise in his interpretation of the Bible. At one time he says :—

"The Text serves only to guess by, we must satisfie our selves fully out of the Authors that liv'd about those times."

At another :—

"Make no more Allegories in Scripture than needs must, the Fathers were too frequent in them, they indeed, before they fully understood the litteral Sense, look'd out for an Allegory. The Folly whereof you may conceive thus; here at the first sight appears to me in my Window, a Glass and a Book, I take it for granted 'tis a Glass and a Book, thereupon I go about to tell you what they signifie; afterwards, upon nearer view, they prove no such things, one is a Box made like a Book, the other is a Picture made like a Glass, where's now my Allegory?"

Again:—

"When Men meddle with the Litteral Text, the question is, where they should stop; in this case a Man might venture his Discretion, and do his best to satisfie himself and others in those places where he doubts, for although we call the Scripture the Word of God (as it is) yet it was writ by a Man, a mercenary Man, whose Copy, either might be false, or he might make it false. . . .

"The Scripture may have more Senses besides the literal, because God understands all things at once, but a Man's Writing has but one true Sense, which is that which the Author meant when he writ it.

"When you meet with several Readings of the Text, take heed you admit nothing against the Tenets of your Church, but do as if you were going over a Bridge, be sure you hold fast by the Rail, and then you may dance there as long as you please, be sure you keep to what is settled, and then you may flourish upon your various Lections."

Selden has much to say about Bishops before, in,

and out of Parliament. His views on the subject are entirely Erastian in their character, but they are by no means so unfair as one might have expected from such a man as our author, whilst they have all the quaintness in conception and expression which we are unable to disassociate from his writings. He says, "A Bishop as a Bishop, had never any Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction." "Antiently," he remarks, "the Noble Men lay within the City for Safety and Security. The Bishops Houses were by the Water-side, because they were held Sacred Persons which no body would hurt." He thinks that "for a Bishop to preach 'tis to do other Folks Office, as if the Steward of the House should execute the Porters or the Cooks place; 'tis his Business to see that they and all other about the House performs their Duties." "Bishops have the same right to sit in Parliament as the best Earls and Barons. . . The Bishops were not Barons, because they had Baronies annext to their Bishopricks. . . . But they are Barons, because they are called by Writ to the Parliament, and Bishops were in the Parliament ever since there was any mention or sign of a Parliament in *England.*" "You would not," says Selden, "have Bishops meddle with Temporal Affairs, think who you are that say it. If a Papist, they do in your Church; if an *English* Protestant, they do among you; if a Presbiterian, where you have no Bishops, you mean your Presbiterian Lay Elders should meddle with Temporal Affairs as well as Spiritual. Besides, all Jurisdiction is Temporal, and in no Church, but they have some Jurisdiction, or other. The question then will be reduced to *Magis* and *Minis*; They meddle

more in one Church than in another." He appears to have held then, as Professor Lightfoot holds now, that the Episcopate was originally elevated out of the Presbyterate. "In the beginning," he says, "Bishops and Presbyters were alike. . . . They that speak ingeniously of Bishops and Presbyters, say, that a Bishop is a great Presbyter, and during the time of his being Bishop, above a Presbyter: as your President of the Colledge of Phisitians, is above the rest, yet he himself is no more than a Doctor of Physick." "The words [Bishop and Presbyter] are promiscuously used, that is confessed by all, and though the word [Bishop] be in *Timothy* and *Titus*, yet that will not prove the Bishop ought to have jurisdiction over the Presbyter. .." "However some of the Bishops pretend to be *Jure Divino*, yet the Practice of the Kingdom had ever been otherwise, for whatever Bishops do otherwise than the Law permits, *Westminster Hall* can controul, or send them to absolve, etc." Yet, on the other hand: "To have no Ministers, but Presbyters, 'tis as in the Temporal State they should have no Officers but Constables. Bishops do best stand with Monarchy, thus, as amongst the Laity, you have Dukes, Lords, Lieutenants, Judges, &c., to send down the King's pleasure to his Subjects. So you have Bishops to govern the inferior Clergy. . . ." "If there be no Bishops, there must be something else, which has the Power of Bishops, though it be in many, and then had you not as good keep them? If," says Selden, resorting, as usual, to his mode of illustration, "you will have no Half Crowns, but only single Pence, yet Thirty single Pence are a Half Crown; and then had you not

as good keep both? But the Bishops have done ill, 'twas the Men, not the Function. As if you should say, you would have no more Half Crowns, because they were stolen, when the truth is they were not stolen because they were Half Crowns, but because they were Money and light in a Thieves Hand." "They that would pull down the Bishops and erect a new way of Government, do as he that pulls down an old House, and builds another, in another fashion, there's a great deal of do, and a great deal of trouble, the old rubbish must be carryed away, and new materials must be brought, Workmen must be provided, and perhaps the old one would have serv'd as well."

This is not, perhaps, the highest point of view from which to regard the question of Church Government; but it was probably the one adopted by the great majority of the laity of the time, and I have therefore ventured to give Selden's opinions on this subject a little more fully than I should otherwise have done. I do not propose, however, to follow him any farther in his speculations in this and similar directions, though it is remarkable how large a proportion of his "Table Talk" is devoted to the discussion of religious questions. Thus he has something to remark upon each of the following: Canon Law, Christmas, Christians, Church, Church of Rome, Churches, Clergy, Confession, Consecrated Places, Council, Convocation, Creed, Genealogy of Christ, Holy-days, Liturgy, Parson, Penance, Pope, Popery, Prayer, Preaching, Predestination, Præmunire, Presbytery, Priests of Rome, Religion, Sabbath, Sacrament, Salvation, Transubstantia-

tion,* Vows, and so on; all of which are treated with that remarkable admixture of learning, scepticism, reverence, shrewdness, and humour which is peculiar to Selden.

Let us, however, turn to some more secular matters, in which the two latter qualities of our author are perhaps more conspicuous than any other.

Thus, of Books:—

"In Answering a Book, 'tis best to be short, otherwise he that I write against will suspect I intend to weary him, not to satisfy him. Besides, in being long I shall give my Adversary a huge advantage; somewhere or other he will pick a hole."

Of Self-denial:—

"'Tis much the Doctrine of the times that Men should not please themselves, but deny themselves everything they take delight in, not look upon Beauty, wear no good Clothes, eat no good meat, &c., which seems the greatest Accusation that can be upon the maker of all good things. If they be not to be us'd, why did God make them? The truth is, they that preach against them, cannot make use of them their selves, and then again they get Esteem by seeming to contemn them.† But mark it while you live, if they do not please themselves as much as they can, and we live more by Example than by precept."

Of Evil Speaking:—

"Speak not ill of a great Enemy, but rather give

* Coleridge much admired Selden's definition of transubstantiation as "only Rhetorick turn'd into Logick." "The best way for a pious Man," says Selden, "is to address himself to the Sacrament with that Reverence and Devotion, as if Christ were really there present."

† This sentence will remind the reader of a well-known maxim by La Bruyère.

him good words, that he may use you the better, if you chance to fall into his Hands. The Spaniard did this when he was dying; his Confessor told him (to work him to Repentance) how the Devil Tormented the Wicked that went to Hell: the Spaniard replying, called the Devil my Lord—I hope my Lord the Devil is not so cruel. His Confessor reproved him. Excuse me, said the *Don*, for calling him so, I know not into whose hands I may fall, and if I happen into his, I hope he will use me the better for giving him good words."

Here, evidently, was a man who believed, with Herbert, that "Good words are worth much, and cost little!"

How felicitous, says Mr. Hannay, is the illustration by which Selden expresses the necessary connection between faith and works! Thus:—

"It was an unhappy Division that has been made between Faith and Works; though in my Intellect I may divide them; just as in the Candle, I know there is both light and heat. But yet put out the Candle, and they are both gone, one remains not without the other: so 'tis betwixt Faith and Works." . . . .

How quietly satirical, says the same writer, is the sarcastic question with which he concludes his observation on the pretended poverty of the friars!—

"The Fryers say they possess nothing, whose then are the Lands they hold? not their Superiour's, he hath vow'd Poverty as well as they, whose then? To answer this, 'twas Decreed that they should say they were the Popes. And why must the Fryers be more perfect than the Pope himself?"

The passage about old friends is well known:—

"Old Friends are best. King *James* us'd to call for his Old Shoes, they were easiest for his Feet."

"Humility," says Selden, "is a Vertue all preach none practise, and yet everybody is content to hear. The Master thinks it good Doctrine for his Servant, the Laity for the Clergy, and the Clergy for the Laity."

The American humorist, Holmes, has said very much the same thing. "Humility," he remarks, "is the greatest of all the virtues—for other people."

But illustration, rather than epigram, is the *forte* of Selden. Take that "exquisite" one, as Mr. Hannay calls it, which says,—

"Tho' some make slight of *Libels*, yet you may see by them how the wind sits: As take a straw, and throw it up into the Air, you shall see by that which way the Wind is, which you shall not do by casting up a Stone. More solid things do not show the complexion of the times so well, as Ballads and Libels."

The truth enunciated in that remark has now become so familiar as to form a platitude; but it should not be forgotten that Selden, by his apposite illustrations, was the first to fix the notion in the public mind.

He is very amusing on the subject of marriages—that theme of witty observation from the earliest to the latest time. "Matrimony," it has been said, "is a chain so heavy that it requires two to carry it." "Marriage," says Selden, "is a desperate thing. The frogs in *Æsop* were extream wise, they had a great mind to some water, but they would not leap into the Well, because they could not get out again." He is equally true, if less witty, when he adds: "Of all the actions of a man's life, his marriage does least concern

other people, yet of all actions of our life, it is most medled with by other people."

He has some admirable remarks under the heading of what he calls the "Measure of Things"—remarks which testify more than ever to the breadth and acuteness of his penetration.

"We measure," he says, "the Excellency of other men, by some Excellency we conceive to be in our selves. *Nash*, a poet, poor enough (as Poets us'd to be), seeing an Alderman with his Gold Chain, upon his great Horse, by way of scorn said to one of his Companions, Do you see yon fellow, how goodly, how big he looks? Why, that fellow cannot make a blank Verse."

As if the manufacture of blank verse were a test by which mankind is to be judged!

"Nay," adds Selden, "we measure the goodness of God from ourselves, we measure his Goodness, his Justice, his Wisdom, by something we call just, good, or wise in our selves, and in so doing we judge proportionably to the Country fellow in the Play, who said if he were a King, he would live like a Lord, and have Pease and Bacon every day, and a Whip that cry'd Slash."

"Money," says Selden, in another place, "makes a man laugh. A blind Fidler playing to a Company, and playing but scurvily, the Company laught at him; His Boy that led him, perceiving it, cry'd, Father, let us be gone, they do nothing but laugh at you. Hold thy peace, Boy, said the Fidler, we shall have their money presently, and then we will laugh at them."

This was real philosophy. On the subject of

"Opinion and Affection," Selden is equally felicitous:—

"Opinion and Affection," he observes, "extremely differ; I may affect a Woman best, but it does not follow I must think her the Handsomest Woman in the World. I love Apples the best of any fruit, but it does not follow, I must think Apples to be the best Fruit. Opinion is something wherein I go about to give Reason why all the World should think as I think. Affection is a thing wherein I look after the pleasing of myself."

"Good!" says Coleridge; "this is the true difference betwixt the beautiful and the agreeable, which Knight and the rest of that πλῆθος ἄθεον have so beneficially confounded, *mere tricibus scilicet et Plutoni.*" *

One of Selden's most characteristic sayings was afterwards repeated almost word for word by Dr. Johnson. "Sir," said the latter to Boswell, "your levellers wish to level *down* as far as themselves, but they cannot bear levelling up to themselves. They would all have some people under them; why not then have some people above them?" "This," says Selden, "is the juggling trick of the Parity, they would have nobody above them, but they do not tell you they would have nobody under them."

He adds another to the many definitions of that difficult word, "pleasure." "Pleasure," he says, "is nothing else but the intermission of pain, the enjoying of something I am in great trouble for 'till I have it." But this, after all, is very much the same as Plato's theory, derived, as Mr. Dallas says, from Aristippus

* "Literary Remains," ii. 361.

and the Cyrenaics,—that pleasure is nothing in itself, but only a momentary escape from pain, or a passage from one pain to another. "In modern times this view has been maintained independently by Kant, whose exposition of the doctrine will be more intelligible nowadays than that of the ancient philosopher."*

"'Tis most undoubtedly true," continues Selden, "that all men are equally given to their pleasure, only thus, one man's pleasure lyes one way, and another's another. Pleasures are all alike, simply considered in themselves, he that hunts, or he that governs the Common-wealth, they both please themselves alike, only we commend that, whereby we our selves receive some benefit. As if a man place his delight in things that tend to the common good, he that takes pleasure to hear Sermons, enjoys himself as much as he that hears Plays, and could he that loves Plays endeavour to love Sermons, possibly he might bring himself to it as well as to any other Pleasure. At first it may seem harsh and tedious, but afterwards 'twould be pleasing and delightful. So it falls out in that, which is the great pleasure of some men, Tobacco, at first they could not abide it, and now they cannot be without it."

Selden is justly severe upon that greatest of all nuisances among amateurs—the amateur poet. Verse-making was, as we all know, a favourite amusement among the young nobles of the Stuart period; and therefore Selden says, "'Tis ridiculous for a Lord to Print Verses, 'tis well enough to make them to please himself, but to make them publick, is foolish.

* "The Gay Science," ii. 34.

If a man in his private Chamber twists his Band-strings, or plays with a Rush to please himself, 'tis well enough, but if he should go into *Fleet Street*, and sit upon a Stall, and twist a Band-string, or play with a Rush, then all the Boys in the Street would laugh at him."

So far, Selden is undoubtedly right; but wise as he was, and learned, and amusing, he was not infallible, and Coleridge very properly takes him to task for some of his utterances upon the subject of poetry. Thus Selden says: "The old poets had no other reason but this, their verse was sung to music; otherwise it had been a senseless thing to have fettered up themselves." "Even Selden," says Coleridge, "here talks ignorantly. Verse is in itself a music, and the natural symbol of that unity of passion with thought and pleasure, which constitutes the essence of all poetry, as contra-distinguished from science, and distinguished from history civil or natural." Again, Selden says: "Verse proves nothing but the quantity of syllables; they are not meant for logic." "True," replies Coleridge; "they, that is, verses, are not logic; but they are, or ought to be, the envoys and representatives of that vital passion, which is the practical cement of logic, and without which logic must remain inert." *

A few more quotations from the more striking passages of the "Table Talk," and I have done. Take, first, of Wives:—

"He that hath a handsome Wife, by other men is thought happy; 'tis a pleasure to look upon her, and be in her company, but the Husband is cloy'd

* "Literary Remains," ii. 362.

with her. We are never content with what we have."*

Of Wit:—

"Women ought not to know their own Wit, because they will still be showing it, and so spoil it; like a Child that will continually be showing its fine new Coat, till at length it all bedawbs it with its Pah-hands."

Surely the same may be as truly said of the wit of men. Self-consciousness, when carried to an extreme, is always disagreeable, and it is generally fatal to genius. How much more charming is the woman who does not know she is beautiful, than the woman who is only too familiar with the fact that she is lovely!

Selden has more than one acute remark in reference to that mysterious sex. For instance: "Men," he says, "are not troubled to hear a Man dispraised, because they know, though he be naught, there's worth in others. But Women are mightily troubled to hear any of them spoken against as if the Sex itself were guilty of some unworthiness."

Here I close my extracts from this interesting book. That it is not only well worthy of its fame in literature, but is well deserving of attentive study, has, I hope, been proved sufficiently; but, were this not so, it would be enough to quote the opinions of some of its more eminent critics. Coleridge thought there was "more weighty bullion sense" in it than he ever found "in the same number of pages of any uninspired writer." "O!" he cries, "to have been

* "For an amusing illustration of this paragraph, see an early chapter of Mr. Hardy's "Far from the Madding Crowd."

with Selden over his glass of wine, making every accident an outlet and a vehicle of wisdom!" Dr. Johnson said the "Table Talk" was better than all the Ana of the Continent, and Hallam was disposed to concur with him; "these sayings," he confessed, "are full of a vigour, raciness, and a kind of scorn of the half-learned, far less rude, but more cutting, than that of Scaliger."* Mr. Hannay expresses the surprise that every one must feel, that the Selden of the "Table Talk" should be the same person as the Selden of the "Titles of Honour."† "Dry, grave, and almost crabbed in his writings—his conversation is homely, humorous, shrewd, vivid, even delightful! He is still the great scholar and the tough Parliamentarian, but merry, playful, and witty. The *ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα* is on the sea of his vast intellect. He writes like the opponent of Grotius; he talks like the friend of Ben Jonson."

What is very remarkable about the present fame of Selden is the fact that it should rest more upon this fragmentary and posthumous publication than upon the many works of erudition which he produced in his lifetime. It is, however, but another testimony to the ineffectiveness of mere learning as a means of gaining the attention of posterity. Knowledge of the kind displayed by Selden in his "History of Tithes" and other works, is apt to become antiquated in the course of time; whilst knowledge of the kind displayed in "Table Talk"—the knowledge of the human mind

* "Introduction to the Literature of Europe."

† "His largest English, and in the opinion of Usher, his best work."—Johnson. It was published in 1614.

and heart—is ever novel, ever interesting, and ever valuable.

That it is presented in so unconnected and condensed a form need not necessarily be an obstacle to the earnest student. It is in the very nature of such maxims and apophthegms that they should be carefully studied, and not merely skimmed with the lightness with which we skim a modern novel.

STEELE'S "TATLER."

THERE can be no doubt, I think, that the immediate origin of the Periodical Essays, which Steele and Addison brought to such perfection, and which were afterwards so successfully cultivated by so many distinguished men, is to be found—as so much that is important in English literature must always be found—in the voluminous writings of Defoe.

It was he who, on February 19, 1704—fifteen years after the production of Selden's "Table Talk"—produced "A Weekly Review of the Affairs of France; Purg'd from the Errors and Partiality of *News-Writers* and *Petty Statesmen*, of all Sides," which instantly rose into unusual favour, and was continued triumphantly, through evil and through good report, from 1704 to 1713.* "The arrangement of its plan," says

* It was at first a quarto sheet, somewhat widely printed, published weekly, and sold for a penny. After the fourth number it was reduced to half a sheet, and sold for two-pence, in smaller print and with double columns. After the eighth number it was published twice a week, on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Before the close of the first volume, it sent forth monthly supplements, and at last it appeared on the Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday of every week; and so continued, without intermission, and written solely by De Foe, for nine years.

Mr. Forster, "was not less original than its form. The plan it struck out in periodical literature was, in this respect, entirely novel. It classed the lesser and the larger morals; it mingled personal and public themes; it put the gravities of life in an entertaining form; and it at once discussed the politics, and corrected the vices, of the age. We may best indicate the manner in which it was done, by naming rapidly the subjects treated in the first volume, in addition to those of political concern. It condemned the fashionable practice of immoderate drinking; in various ways ridiculed the not less fashionable habit of swearing; inveighed against the laxity of marital ties; exposed the licentiousness of the stage; discussed, with great clearness and sound knowledge, questions affecting trade and the poor; laughed at the rage for gambling speculations; and waged inveterate war with that barbarous practice of the duel, in which Defoe had to confess, with shame, that he had once during his life been engaged." *

Its machinery for matters non-political was a so-called "Scandalous Club," which was organized for the purpose of hearing and adjudicating upon complaints brought before it. "After our Serious Matters are over," Defoe had said, "we shall at the end of every Paper, Present you with a little Diversion, as anything seems to make the World Merry; and whether Friend or Foe, one Party or another, if anything happens so scandalous as to require an open Reproof, the World may meet with it there." The "Little Diversion" accordingly appeared in the following form:—

* Forster's "Essays," ii. 55-6.

"MERCURE SCANDALE:

OR,

ADVICE FROM THE SCANDALOUS CLUB.

Translated out of French.

"This Society is a Corporation long since established in *Paris*, and we cannot compleat our Advices from *France*, without entertaining the World with everything we meet with from that Country.

"And, tho' Corresponding with the Queen's enemies is prohibited; yet since the matter will be so honest, as only to tell the World of what everybody will own to be scandalous, we reckon we shall be welcome.

"This Corporation has been set up some months, and open'd their first Sessions about last *Bartholomew* Fair; but having not yet obtain'd a Patent, they have never, till now, made their Resolves publick.

"The Business of this Society is to censure the Actions of Men, not of Parties, and in particular those Actions which are made publick so by their Authors, as to be, in their own Nature, an Appeal to the general Approbation.

"They do not design to expose Persons, but things, and of them, none but such as more than ordinarily deserve it; they who would not be censur'd by this Assembly, are desired to act with caution enough, not to fall under their Hands; for they resolve to treat Vice, and Villanous Actions, with the utmost Severity."

The writer then goes on to notice "the first considerable matter that came before this Society:"—

"On the 10th of September last, there was," he

says, "a long Hearing, before the Club, of a Fellow that said he had kill'd the Duke of *Bavaria*. Now as *David* punished the Man that said he had kill'd King *Saul*, whether it was so or no, 'twas thought this Fellow ought to be delivered up to Justice, tho' the Duke of *Bavaria* was alive.

"Upon the whole, 'twas voted a Scandalous Thing, that News-Writers sho'd kill Kings and Princes, and bring them to life again at pleasure; and to make an Example of this Fellow, he was dismiss'd, upon Condition he should go to the Queen's-bench once a Day, and bear Fuller, his Brother of the Faculty, company two hours for fourteen Days together, which cruel Punishment was executed with the utmost Severity."

The reader will remember, says Mr. Forster, the time when this review was planned. "Ensign Steele was yet but a lounger in the lobbies of the theatres, and Addison had not yet emerged from his garret in the Haymarket. The details of common life had not yet been invested with the graces of literature; the social and polite moralities were still disregarded in the press; the world knew not the influence of my Lady Betty Modish, and Colonel Ranter still swore at the waiters.* Where, then, shall we look for 'the first sprightly runnings' of *Tatlers* and *Spectators* if we have not found them in Defoe's *Review*?"

* "There is Colonel Ranter, who never spoke without an oath until he saw the Lady Betty Modish; now, never gives his man an order but it is, 'Pray, Tom, do it.' The drawers where he drinks live in perfect happiness. . . . Where he used to say 'Damn it, it is so;' he now 'believes there is some mistake; he must confess, he is of another opinion; but, however, he will not insist.'"—*The Tatler*, No. 10.

"Nothing," says Professor Morley, "can be more evident than the family likeness between this forefather of the *Tatler* and *Spectator* and its more familiar descendants. There is a trick of voice common to all, and some papers of Defoe's might have been written for the *Spectator*." *

To be sure, "the earlier was the ruder workman; but wit, originality, and knowledge were not less the tools he worked with," and it seems very evident that it was the remarkable popularity of Defoe's work that first attracted the attention of Steele towards his project of the *Tatler*. Macaulay was of opinion that it was the facility with which Steele, as Gazetteer, was enabled to obtain early foreign information, that suggested to him the scheme of publishing a periodical paper on a new plan.† But though this may have had something to do with it, it is much more probable that the success of the *Review* was the real origin of Steele's enterprise. It was on Tuesday, the 12th of April, 1709—when the *Review* was in the heyday of its career—that Steele issued the first number of "The Tatler; or, Lucubrations of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.;" and the new-comer was, I dare say, received all the more kindly from the fact that its predecessor had already obtained so strong a hold upon the public mind.

Much, too, was owing to the felicity with which Steele had hit upon the adoption of a popular and notorious pseudonym. "It happened very luckily,"

* Introduction to his edition of the *Spectator*, p. xviii.

† *Edinburgh Review*, July, 1843. Throughout this essay, Macaulay's statements regarding Steele are to be taken *cum grano salis*. He was too intent upon his praise of Addison to be otherwise than unfair to Steele.

he says, in dedicating his first volume to a Mr. Maynwaring, "that, a little before I had resolved upon this design, a gentleman had written predictions, and two or three other pieces in my name, which rendered it famous through all parts of Europe; and, by an inimitable spirit and humour, raised it to as high a pitch of reputation as it could possibly arrive at."

The reference here is to a pamphlet written by Swift in 1708, in which, under the *nom-de-plume* of Isaac Bickerstaff, he endeavoured, by the exercise of his peculiar irony, "to prevent," as he said, "the people of England from being further imposed upon by vulgar almanac-makers." He pretended that he was himself an adept in astrology, and among some other predictions which have become historical, remarked that he had consulted the star of the nativity of Partridge, one of these said almanac-makers, and had found that he would infallibly die upon the 29th of March next, about eleven at night, of a raging fever, wherefore he advised him to consider of it and settle his affairs in time. This was followed in its turn by an account of "the accomplishment of the first of Mr. Bickerstaff's predictions, being an account of the death of Mr. Partridge, the almanac-maker, upon the 29th inst.". Of course, the man, if he had been wise, would have taken no notice of this humorous sally; but, on the contrary, he was absurd enough to insert the following advertisement in his next year's almanac:—"Whereas it has been industriously given out by Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq., and others, to prevent the sale of this year's almanac, that John Partridge is dead; this may

inform all his loving countrymen that he is still living, in health, and they are knaves that reported it otherwise." To this Swift added "A Vindication of Isaac Bickerstaff, Esq.," which is printed in his Works, and was followed by a reply, in the character of Partridge, called "Squire Bickerstaff Detected," which was said to be written by Nicholas Rowe, by Dr. Yalden, or by Congreve. The subject was once more referred to by Steele in the first number of the *Tatler*, where he says, "I have in another place, and in a paper by itself, sufficiently convinced this man that he is dead, and, if he has any shame, I do not doubt but that by this time he owns it to all his acquaintance: for though the legs and arms and whole body of that man may still appear, and perform their animal functions; yet since, as I have elsewhere observed, his art is gone, the man is gone."

Thus skilfully did Steele connect his paper with the popularity already won by his two great contemporaries. He was equally successful in keeping up his character of an astrologer all through the *Tatler*, though to that of an adept in necromancy he added that of a general *censor morum*. "The reputation of a conjuror having had the effect of excluding him from public employment, he resolved," says Mr. Montgomery,* "to establish a post for himself by reviving the ancient Roman office of public censor," whose range of observation was to be co-extensive with the world itself.

"Quicquid agunt homines—
Nostri est farrago libelli." †

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* "Life of Steele," i. 145. † Juvenal, Satire i. 85—6.

Such was the motto he affixed to his front page; with the translation—

> "Whate'er men do, or say, or think, or dream,
> Our motley paper seizes for its theme."

"All accounts of gallantry, pleasure, and entertainment, shall be under the article of White's Chocolate-House; poetry, under that of Will's Coffee-house; learning, under the title of Grecian; foreign and domestic news, you will have from Saint James Coffee-house; and what else I have to offer on any other subject shall be dated from my own Apartment."* Not that the *Tatler* was by any means to be confined to metropolitan gossip. The editor originated a system of rural correspondence, much of which he took the liberty of writing himself, and of which he says, "Doubtless among friends, bred as we have been to the knowledge of books as well as men, a letter dated from a garden, a wood, a meadow, or the banks of a river, may be more entertaining than one from Tom's, White's, or St. James's. Such a frame of mind," as he goes on to say, "raises that sweet enthusiasm which warms the imagination at the sight of every work of nature, and turns all round you into picture and landscape."†

Du reste, the general aim and intention of the *Tatler* are best described in the words of its originator, who, in the opening sentences of his first number, says, "Though the other papers, which are published for the use of the people of England, have certainly very wholesome effects, and are laudable in their particular

* *Tatler*, No. 1. † *Ibid*, No. 89.

kinds, they do not seem to come up to the main design of such variations, which I humbly presume should be principally intended for the use of politic persons, who are so public spirited as to neglect their own affairs to look into transactions of state. Now these gentlemen, for the most part, being persons of strong zeal, and weak intellects, it is both a charitable and necessary work to offer something, whereby such worthy and well-affected members of the commonwealth may be instructed, after their reading, what to think; which shall be the end and purpose of this my paper, wherein I shall, from time to time, report and consider all matters of what kind soever shall occur to me, and publish such my advices and reflections every Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday in the week, for the convenience of the post.* I resolve," he says, "to have something which may be of entertainment to the fair sex, in honour of whom I have taken the title of this paper."

By-and-by, however, his ideas broadened, and, in the dedication I have already referred to, he declares "the general purpose" of his paper to be, "to expose the false arts of life, to pull off the disguises of cunning, vanity, and affectation, and to recommend a general simplicity in our dress, our discourses, and our behaviour;" also, "to rally all those singularities of life, through the different professions and characters in it, which obstructed anything that was truly good and great;"† and, again, "to allure the reader with the

* The *Tatler* was originally printed on a half-sheet folio. The first four numbers were given gratis; afterwards each number cost a penny.

† Preface to the "Drummer."

variety of his subjects, and insinuate, if he could, the weight of reason with the agreeableness of wit." *

Of the general character of the contents of the *Tatler* some idea may be obtained if I give a brief analysis of the opening numbers. In No. 1, we have, from White's Coffee-house, an account of a young man who fell in love with a lady whom he had only seen once, and whom he thought of all day long, to the neglect of his business and to the detriment of his health; from Will's Coffee-house, a criticism on a performance of "the celebrated comedy called 'Love for Love,'" in which "those excellent players, Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, and Mr. Dogget," took part; from St. James's Coffee-house, various items of foreign news; and from his own apartment, the reference to Partridge which I have already quoted. In No. 2 we have from Will's Coffee-house "a tale" in verse, "for the Ladies," called "The Medicine," contributed by the Mr. William Harrison, who, aided by Swift, who probably thought that he had some claim to the paternity of the *Tatler*, afterwards started a second *Tatler* in the month of the original's decease; from St. James's Coffee-house, items of foreign news as before; and from his own apartment a contradiction of the statement currently made by the English newswriters, that France was in the most deplorable condition, and that her people were dying in great multitudes. In No. 3 we have, from Will's Coffee-house, a criticism on a performance of "The comedy called the Country Wife," in which Wycherly is rebuked for his licentiousness, and a certain young nobleman for

* Concluding paper of the *Tatler*.

coming to theatre drunk, with some animadversions on a recent poem by Blackmore; from St. James's Coffee-house, the usual foreign intelligence; and from his own apartment, a recommendation to the reader to go to the play that evening, when the "Stratagem" is to be acted for the benefit of his near kinsman, Mr. John Bickerstaff, a real actor of that name. In No. 4, after being requested to understand that the author does not pretend to raise a credit for his work upon the weight of his politic news only, but, as the Latin sentence on the title-page informs us, will take anything that offers for the subject of his discourse, we have, from White's Chocolate-house, a description of the differing charms of two ladies, Chloe and Clarissa, "who have for some time engrossed the dominion of the town;" from Will's Coffee-house, a criticism on the opera of "Pyrrhus and Demetrius," which induces Steele to protest against "being pleased with the suspense" of our faculties "for three hours together, and the being given up to the shallow satisfaction of the eyes and ears only;" from St. James's Coffee-house, another quota of foreign news; and from his own apartment, a fanciful allusion to the state of parties in Britain, which figures under the fictitious name of Fidelia. In No. 5 we have, from White's Chocolate-house, a further reference to the gentleman whose melancholy love affair is mentioned in No. 1; from Will's Coffee-house, a short notice of Swift's recently-published "Project for the Advancement of Religion," which is declared to be written "by one whose virtue sits easy about him, and to whom vice is thoroughly contemptible;" from St. James's Coffee-house, the usual news from abroad; and

from his own apartment, an essay which begins with a story of the siege of Namur, and ends with an eulogium on the Duke of Marlborough. In No. 6, the last that I shall notice *seriatim*, we have, from Will's Coffee-house, two bits of criticism—one on a passage in "Paradise Lost," and another on a peculiarity in Virgil's characterizations of his hero,* which seems to have been communicated to Steele by Addison, and which was the first intimation, it is said, that Addison received of his friend's connection with the new periodical; from Grecian Coffee-house, an endeavour "to put the actions of Homer's Iliad into an exact journal;" from St. James's Coffee-house, foreign intelligence of the usual character; and from his own apartment, some considerations on the respective characteristics of Alexander and Cæsar.

Even this, however, gives the reader but a faint conception of the remarkable variety of topics touched upon by Steele in the pages of the *Tatler*. A list of the characters and sketches with which they are enlivened would in itself occupy more space than I have at my disposal. They are so numerous that, as Mr. Forster says, "the difficulty is in selection. Shall we take the wealthy wags who give one another credit in discourse according to their purses, who jest by the pound, and make answers as they honour bills;

* It is generally *pius* or *pater* Æneas; but in the meeting with Dido in the cave, "where," says Steele, "*Pius* Æneas would have been absurd and *Pater* Æneas a burlesque, the poet wisely dropped them both for *Dux Trojanus;* which he has repeated twice in Juno's speech and in his own narration; for he very well knew a loose action might be consistent enough with the usual manners of a soldier, though it became neither the chastity of a pious man nor the gravity of the father of a people."

and who, with unmoved muscles for the most exquisite wit, whose banker's balance they are not acquainted with, smirk at every word each speaks to the other? * Shall we take the modest young Bachelor of Arts, who, thinking himself fit for anything he can get, is above nothing that is offered; and having come to town recommended to a chaplain's place, but finding none vacant, modestly accepts that of a postilion? † Shall we introduce the eminent story-teller and politician, who owes the regularity and fluency of his dulness entirely to his snuffbox? ‡ Shall we make acquaintance with the whimsical young gentleman, so ambitious to be thought worse than he is, that in his degree of understanding he sets up for a free-thinker, and talks atheistically in coffee-houses all day, though every morning and evening, it can be proved upon him, he regularly at home says his prayers? § Shall the well-meaning Umbra take us by the button, and talk half an hour to us upon matters wholly insignificant with an air of the utmost solemnity, that we may teach ourselves the charity of not being offended with what has a good intention in it, by remembering that to little men little things are of weight, and that though our courteous friend never served us, he is ever willing to do it, and believes he really does it? ‖ Or, while Mr. Bickerstaff thus teaches us that impotent kindness is to be tolerated, shall Mrs. Jenny Distaff show us that impotent malice is not, and that society should scout the fool who cannot listen to praise without whispering detraction, or hear a man of worth

* *Tatler*, No. 57. † *Ibid.*, No. 52. ‡ *Ibid.*, No. 35.
§ *Ibid.*, No. 77. ‖ *Ibid.*, No. 37.

named without recounting the worst passages of his life?" *

Putting aside such graphic portraitures as those of Will Dactyle, that "smallest of pedants;" of Senecio, that "best-natured of old men;" of Will Courtley, of Sophronius, of Jack Dimple, and of many others; let us take the account of the famous club at the Trumpet,—the worthy successor of the Scandal Club of Defoe—and no less worthy predecessor of the Spectator Club of Addison. There is Sir Jeffrey Notch, the elder and foreman of the Club; a decayed gentleman of ancient family, who, having come to a large estate before he arrived at years of discretion, squandered it rapidly in hounds and horses and cock-fighting, and now regards himself in the light of an honest worthy gentleman, who has been the victim of misfortune. Next comes Major Matchlock, who served in the last civil wars, and has all the battles by heart; who does not think any action in Europe worthy of comparison with Marston Moor, and tells every night the story of how he was knocked off his horse at the rising of the London apprentices. There is old Dick Reptile, a good-natured easy-going creature, who does not say much for himself, but laughs very heartily at the jokes of the others. And, lastly, there is the elderly beneher of the Temple, who has by heart ten couplets of "Hudibras," which he never fails to apply before leaving the Club every evening, and who, if any modern wit or town frolic be mentioned, shakes his head over the dulness of the present age, and tells a story of the notorious Jack Ogle, who was an associate

* *Tatler*, No. 31.

of Rochester in most of that erring noble's deeds of darkness and daring.* As for Mr. Bickerstaff himself, who says it was his usual custom "to relax and unbend in the conversation of such as were rather easy than shining companions," he seems to have been esteemed by them because they saw that he was "something respected by others;" but though they conceded to him a great deal of learning, they did not credit him with much knowledge of the world, "insomuch that the Major sometimes in the height of his military pride, calls me the philosopher; and Sir Jeffrey, no longer than last night, upon a dispute what day of the month it was then in Holland, pulled his pipe out of his mouth, and cried, 'What does the Scholar say to it?'"

I have already quoted a reference to Mrs. Jenny Distaff, half-sister of Bickerstaff, who was probably introduced as the exponent of the views and interests of her sex. His three nephews appear for the apparent purpose of enabling Steele to promulgate his opinions on the subject of education; and the *dramatis personæ* are completed in the person of a familiar spirit called Pacolet, who is the vehicle for conveying a variety of information beyond human ken or experience.

Especially notable in the *Tatler* is the fact, that though full of the most admirable moral lessons, the moral is never obviously or ostentatiously stated, but is rather insinuated by means of such sketches of character as have been already referred to. Vice is attacked in the concrete, not in the abstract; follies are laughed at, not as abstractions, but as personified in the many indi-

* *Tatler*, No. 132.

viduals who appear in these pages. Thus a lesson against over-easiness in temper is learnt from the crafty old cit in No. 176, who, speaking of a well-natured young fellow, set up with a good stock in Lombard Street, says, "I will lay no more money in his hands, for he never denied me anything." The vanity of silly fathers is corrected in the narrative of the Shoe-lane pastrycook, who, in No. 173, has an objection to take his son from his learning, but is resolved, as soon as he has a little smattering in the Greek, to put him apprentice to a soap-boiler. The story of the country squire who set up for a man of the town, and went home, "in the gaiety of his heart," to beat his wife, illustrates the discredit which the morals of the stage then cast upon marriage, and the separate beds, the silent tables, and the solitary homes, to which it was the ambition of the men of pleasure at that time to contribute. We are taught in No. 151 to observe the sudden source of pride in the two sisters, one of whom holds up her head higher than ordinary from having on a pair of striped garters; whilst we are taught to notice the more extravagant forms of the same passion in the cobbler of Ludgate Hill, who, being naturally a lover of respect, and considering that his circumstances are such that no man living will give it him, reverses the law of idolatry, which requires the man to worship the image, and contrives an inferior to himself in the wooden figure of a beau, which, hat in one hand, and in a posture of profound respect, holds out obsequiously in the other what is needful to its master's occasions.

Again: it is to be remarked of the *Tatler*, that it

exhibits the most wonderful power of obtaining wisdom out of trifles, of turning the most insignificant incidents to humorous or didactical account. "Without gravely translating his humorous announcement that, when any part of his paper appeared dull, it was to be noted that there was a design in it, we may say," says Mr. Forster, "with perfect truth, that he had a design in everything. But a laugh never yet looked so wise as a frown, and unless you are at pains to look a little beneath it, the wisdom of Mr. Isaac Bickerstaff may now and then escape you. The humorous old gentleman who is always prying into his neighbour's concerns, when he is not gossiping of his own; to whom the young beau is made responsible for wearing red-heeled shoes, and the young belle for showing herself too long at her glass; who turns the same easy artillery of wit against the rattling dice-box and the roaring pulpit; who has early notice of most of the love affairs in town, can tell you of half the domestic quarrels, and knows more of a widow with a handsome jointure than her own lawyer or next of kin; whose tastes take a range as wide as his experience, to whom Plutarch is not less familiar than a pretty fellow, and who has for his clients not only the scholars of the Grecian, but the poets at Will's, the men of fashion at White's, and the quidnuncs of the St. James's,—this old humorist, you would say, is about the last man to pass for a Socrates; and yet there was something more than whim in the old Isaac's ambition to have it said of his lucubrations, that, whereas Socrates had brought philosophy down from heaven to inhabit among men, he had himself aimed to

bring philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools and colleges, to dwell in clubs and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses."

It is Steele's great characteristic, more perhaps than that of any man of his time, that what he wrote was written from life, not books, and that when he took up a book, it was not for a bookish purpose; he was thinking always of the life around him.* "Addison," says Hazlitt, "seems to have spent most of his time in his study, and to have spun out and wire-drawn the hints which he borrowed from Steele, or took from Nature, to the utmost."† "Wit more piercing or more keen, a reflective spirit of wider scope, a style more correct and pure, even humour more consummate than his own, will be found, in the way of comment upon life, among his friends and fellow-labourers; but for that which vividly brings actual life before us, which touches the heart as with a present experience, which sympathizes to the very core of all that moves the joys or sorrows of his fellows, and which still, even as then, can make the follies of men ridiculous and their vices hateful, without branding ridicule or hate upon the men themselves, we must turn to Steele. In his little pictures of the world, that open new and unexpected views of it; in his wonderfully pathetic little stories, that fill our eyes with tears; in those trivial details by which he would make life easier and happier; in those accidents, the most common and familiar out of which he draws secrets of humanity; what most, after all, impresses us is a something independent of authorship."

The morality of Addison and Johnson is perhaps a little too obvious and decided to be altogether enjoyable or impressive. The former has always the air and demeanour of a parson in a tie-wig, as he was once happily characterized by Mandeville; but Steele is not so far above us as to overshadow us by his superiority. "We like him all the better for being nearer and more like ourselves, not for being higher or standing apart; and it is still the *man* whom his writings make pleasant to us, more than the author, the wit, the partizan, or the fine gentleman."

Apart, however, from Steele's fidelity to human nature, is the admirable picture that his work affords us of the men and manners of the times in which he lived. A great work of literature has always this double interest for posterity,—that it is at once a picture of the permanent and transient phenomena of human nature. And the *Tatler*, valuable as it is for the insight it affords us into the characteristics of mankind in general, is equally valuable for the light it sheds upon the England and Englishmen of the reigns of Anne and George I. "As we read these delightful volumes," says Thackeray,* "the past age returns, the England of our ancestors is revivified. The Maypole rises in the Strand again in London; the churches are thronged with daily worshippers; the beaux are gathering in the coffee-houses; the gentry are going to the Drawing-room; the ladies are thronging to the toy-shops; the chairmen are jostling in the streets; the footmen are running with links before the chariots, or fighting round the theatre

* "Lectures on the Humourists: Steele."

doors. In the country I see the young Squire riding to Eton with his servants behind him, and Will Wimble, the friend of the family, to see him safe. To make that journey from the Squire's and back, Will is a week on horseback. The coach takes five days between London and Bath. The judges and the bar ride the circuit. If my lady comes to town in her post-chariot, her people carry pistols to fire a salute on Captain Macheath if he should appear, and her couriers ride ahead to prepare apartments for her at the great caravanserais on the road; Boniface receives her under the creaking sign of the 'Bell,' or the 'Ram,' and he and his chamberlains bow her up the great stair to the state-apartments, whilst her carriage rumbles into the court-yard, where the 'Exeter Fly' is housed, that performs the journey in eight days, God willing, having achieved its daily flight of twenty miles, and landed its passengers for supper and sleep. The curate is taking his pipe in the kitchen, where the Captain's man—having hung up his master's half-pike—is at his bacon and eggs, bragging of Ramilies and Malplaquet to the town's folk, who have their club in the chimney-corner. The Captain is ogling the chambermaid in the wooden gallery, or bribing her to know who is the pretty young mistress that has come in the coach. The pack-horses are in the great stable, and the drivers and ostlers carousing in the tap; and in Mrs. Landlady's bar, over a glass of strong waters, sits a gentleman of military appearance, who travels with pistols, as all the rest of the world does, and has a rattling grey mare in the stables, which will be saddled and

away with its owner half an hour before the 'Fly' sets on its last day's flight. And some five miles on the road, as the 'Exeter Fly' comes jingling and creaking onwards, it will suddenly be brought to a halt by a gentleman on a grey mare, with a black vizard on his face, who thrusts a long pistol into the coach window, and bids the company to hand out their purses."

Such was England in the days when the *Tatler* first made its appearance, and became so popular as effectually to cast the *Review* into the shade. It was issued for three half-pence in such a form that the good people in town could add, on a blank sheet, a few words to their friends in the country; and in this way it penetrated to the most remote parts of the land. For instance, in the fens of Lincolnshire, the Antiquary, Maurice Johnson, collected his neighbours of Spalding. "Taking care," it is said, "not to alarm the country gentlemen by any premature mention of antiquities, he endeavoured at first to allure them into the more flowery paths of literature. In 1709 a few of them were brought together every post-day at the coffee-house in the Abbey Yard; and after one of the party had read aloud the last number of the *Tatler*, they proceeded to talk over the subject among themselves."

When, after 271 numbers had appeared, the *Tatler* was discontinued, and the *Spectator* started under the editorship of Addison, the sorrow in the reading world was profound, and people went about mourning for the defunct journal as for their dearest friend. It is probable that the *Spectator* never at any time attained to the popularity of its predecessor, and for my own

part, I agree with those who, notwithstanding the great fame of Addison, have a decided preference for Steele and for his delightful paper. It is generally observed that the morality of the *Spectator* is of a loftier character than that of the *Tatler*, and certainly the moralising is more deliberate, but not on that account the more impressive. "Addison," says Mr. Arnold, "has not on his subject of morals the force of ideas of the moralists of the first class—the classical moralists; he has not the best ideas attainable in or about his time, and which were, so to speak, in the air then to be seized by the finest spirits; he is not to be compared for power, searchingness, or delicacy of thought, to Pascal, or La Bruyère, or Vauvenargues."* He is not to be compared, I venture to say, to Steele; and as for style, there are many who have seen in the style of Steele more grace and buoyancy than they can detect in the style of Addison. I have already quoted two sentences from Hazlitt's admirable criticism. Let me quote a few more. "I am far," he says, "from wishing to depreciate Addison's talents, but I am anxious to do justice to Steele, who was, I think, upon the whole a less artificial and more original writer. The humorous descriptions of Steele resemble loose sketches or fragments of a comedy; those of Addison are rather comments or ingenious paraphrases on the genuine text. The characters of the club, not only in the *Tatler*, but in the *Spectator*, were drawn by Steele. That of Sir Roger de Coverley is among the number." And if any one is inclined to insist upon the superior literary acumen of Addison, the admirer of Steele is

* "Essays in Criticism."

justified in pointing out that it was he, and not Addison, who first had the daring to insist upon the superlative beauties of Shakespeare and Milton. "I prefer," says Hazlitt, "Steele's occasional selection of beautiful poetical passages, without any affectation of analysing their beauties, to Addison's finer spun theories." And the pathos of Steele's occasional real or fictitious narratives is always recognised. "I might refer," says the same critic, "to those of the lover and his mistress, when the theatre, in which they were, caught fire; of the bridegroom who by accident kills his bride on the day of their marriage; the story of Mr. Eustace and his wife; and the fine dream about his own mistress when a youth."

But a comparison between his abilities and Addison's is the last thing which Steele himself would have thought of instituting. They had been friends in youth, and remained friends in their manhood and old age; and not content with celebrating his friend, under a fictitious name, in the body of the *Tatler*, Steele hastens, in his Preface to the octavo edition of 1710, to praise him in terms which are more than adequate to the occasion. "I have," he says, "only one gentleman, who will be nameless, to thank for any frequent assistance to me, which indeed it would have been barbarous in him to have denied to one with whom he has lived in an intimacy from childhood, considering the great ease with which he is able to dispatch the most entertaining pieces of this nature. This good office he performed with such force of genius, humour, wit, and learning, that I fared like a distressed prince; I was undone by my auxiliary;

when I had once called him in I could not subsist without dependence on him." *

As a matter of fact, out of two hundred and seventy-one numbers, forty-one only are given to Addison. Thirty-four were written by Steele and Addison in conjunction. Swift is credited with portions, at least, of Nos. 9, 32, 35, 59, 63, 66, 67, 68, 70, 71, 238, and 258, and with the whole of No. 230. It was in reference to him that Steele wrote, in his general Preface, "I must acknowledge also that, at my first entering on this work, a certain uncommon way of thinking, and a turn in conversation peculiar to that agreeable gentleman, rendered his company very advantageous to one whose imagination was to be continually employed upon obvious and common subjects, though at the same time obliged to treat them in a new and unbeaten method."

The other occasional contributors to the *Tatler* may be dismissed very briefly. I have already mentioned the Mr. Harrison who contributed to No. 2. Among others are the celebrated John Hughes, who is said to have written Nos. 64, 66, 73, 76, 113, and 194; Mr. Swysden, who sent the humorous genealogy of the Bickerstaff family for No. 11; a Mr. Fuller, who was the author of No. 205; Mr. James Greenwood, who wrote No. 234; Anthony Henley, Charles Dartiquenave, and Mr. Asplin.

These were the men who from time to time assisted

* Pope says, in "Spence's Anecdotes," that Addison would now and then "play upon" Steele, and that Steele would take it very kindly. I dare say he did. Johnson, we know, was accustomed to do the same kind office for Goldsmith; but one would rather be Goldsmith than Johnson, after all.

Steele in his difficult enterprise; but Steele was the origin and animating spirit of the whole, and to him, almost entirely, is the credit due. It is different when we come to the *Spectator*, to which he in turn was only a contributor; but I think most of us would rather have written the *Tatler* than the *Spectator*, and I am sure most of us would rather have been Steele than Addison. The latter probably was, of the two, the most irreproachable; but the former had, I believe, the quicker intelligence and the kindlier heart. He was not, perhaps, the "Christian Hero" that he painted; but his pulses throbbed with the noblest sympathy with, and charity towards, his fellow-man.

DEFOE'S "ROBINSON CRUSOE."

It is remarkable that to Defoe, to whom we owe the foundation of the English periodical essay, we should also owe the origin of the modern English novel. To be sure, "Robinson Crusoe" itself cannot be said to be a novel in our present sense of the term; but its success undoubtedly suggested to Defoe the composition of those other stories and romances which must have quickened and stimulated the genius of Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and Richardson.*

We must first, however, settle the question as to whether "Robinson Crusoe" was or was not really the work of its reputed author. The reader will probably be unaware that there ever existed any doubt on the subject; but it is no less true that the authorship of the famous story has been assigned to at least two other persons than Defoe. In the "Biographia Britannica," nearly fifty years after its first publication, it was attributed to the pen of the Dr. Arbuthnot who wrote the celebrated "History of John Bull;"

* "Swift," says Mr. Forster, "directly copied from him; Richardson founded his style of minute narrative wholly upon him; Fielding, Smollett, Sterne, and Goldsmith, — Godwin, Scott, Bulwer, and Dickens,—have been more or less indebted to him."

and eight years afterwards Thomas Warton gravely stated that the Rev. Benjamin Holloway, of Middleton Stony, told him that Lord Sunderland assured him that the first volume of "Robinson Crusoe" was written by the Earl of Oxford while a prisoner in the Tower, "as an amusement under confinement;" that it was given to Defoe, who visited him there; and that it was printed by him as his own, the second volume, "the inferiority of which is generally acknowledged," being added, with the approbation of the noble lord!

The first allegation is happily contradicted by the writer himself, who, at the close of his account, observes that "Robinson Crusoe" was "the delectable Offspring of the teeming Brain of Daniel Defoe, a Writer famous in his Generation for Politics and Poetry." The second is equally susceptible of refutation. In the first place, Lord Oxford was so prostrated by illness, during the greater part of his imprisonment, that it was a matter of speculation whether or not he would live to be tried. He was incapable of preparing his defence, and on that account, says Mr. Lee,* the House of Lords, from time to time, granted his petitions for postponement of the trial. He could not therefore have been able to compose a story "as an amusement" whilst "under confinement." In the second place, he was discharged from prison two years before "Robinson Crusoe" was heard of. In the third place, only the Earl of Oxford and Defoe could have known the truth of the matter, and there is no evi-

* In the introduction to an edition of "Robinson Crusoe," which has the immense advantage of being printed from the first edition, but is sadly disfigured by the caricature-illustrations of M. Ernest Griset. I am largely indebted to Mr. Lee throughout the next few pages.

dence to prove that either of them uttered a word on the subject. In the fourth place, Lord Sunderland would have been the last person to whom they would have communicated; because, in the fifth place, he had always spoken and voted against Lord Oxford, and there could be no intercourse between the prisoner and the man who believed him to be a traitor and desired to bring him to the block. In the sixth place, Defoe was, during the imprisonment of the Earl of Oxford, in the service of the Government and under the control of Sunderland. And, lastly, granting (what Mr. Lee, wrongly, I think, does not seem inclined to grant) that the second volume of "Robinson Crusoe" is inferior to the first, it is not the less certainly the production of the same man as he who wrote the opening volume.

If, indeed, further evidence is required of Defoe's claim to the authorship of the story with which his name is always connected, it is to be found in none of the circumstances which followed its first publication. Thus, in the year of its appearance, and before the second volume was published, a mutilated abridgment of the first part was clandestinely printed for a man called Cox, who, when threatened and remonstrated with, merely replied by an advertisement in the *Flying Post* in which he abused Defoe with a bitterness that would have been absurd if not directed against the author of the story. In the same year, also, Charles Gildon published a satirical pamphlet, entitled "The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures Mr. D—— De F——, of London, Hosier, who has lived above fifty years by himself, in the Kingdoms of North and South Britain. The various Shapes he has

appear'd in, and the Discoveries he has made for the Benefit of his Country. In a Dialogue between *Him*, *Robinson Crusoe*, and his Man *Friday*. With Remarks Serious and Comical upon the Life of Crusoe." In "An Epistle to D—— D'F—e, the reputed author of Robinson Crusoe," the writer confesses that "Crusoe" was already "fam'd from Tattle Street to Limehouse-hole. There is not an old Woman," he says, "that can go to the price of it, but buys the 'Life and Adventures,' and leaves it as a Legacy, with the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' the 'Practice of Piety,' and 'God's Revenge against Murther,' to her Posterity." A few years afterwards, when Bishop Hoadley published in the *London Journal* some strictures about Robinson Crusoe filling his pockets with biscuits, after previously divesting himself of his clothes, Defoe replied very warmly in a contemporary print; and it is said he was so extremely angry when one of the pirates, who then infested the coasts of Carolina and Virginia, named his ship the "Robinson Crusoe," that he called him "a most bloody-minded murdering Rogue." A collateral and inferential bearing on the fact of Defoe's authorship may be found, adds Mr. Lee, in the chagrin of the booksellers against Mr. William Taylor, for his having secured to himself the great profits arising from the publication of "Robinson Crusoe," and in the further fact that seven or more of them eventually entered into a confederacy for the joint publication of such works of fiction as Defoe might afterwards write.

Assuming, then, that Daniel Defoe was really and truly the author of "Robinson Crusoe," it becomes an

interesting subject of inquiry as to the sources of his inspiration. Where, it may be asked, did Defoe obtain the first hint of his remarkable work?

He himself assures us, in the Preface to his "Serious Reflections," of which I hope to give some description presently, that he intended "Robinson Crusoe" to be, at least in some sense, "a kind of type of what the dangers and vicissitudes and surprising escapes of his own life had been." Speaking in the person of his hero, he informs the reader that "the Story, though Allegorical, is also Historical, and that it is the beautiful Representation of a life of unexampled Misfortunes, and of a Variety not to be met with in the World. . . . Farther, that there is a Man alive, and well known too, the Actions of whose life are the just Subject of these Volumes, and to whom all or most Part of the Story directly alludes; this may be depended upon for Truth, and to this I set my Name. The famous History of *Don Quixote*, a Work which thousands read with Pleasure, to one that knows the Meaning of it, was an emblematic History of, and a just Satyr upon, the Duke *de Medina Sidonia*, a person very remarkable at that Time in *Spain*. To those who knew the Original, the Figures were lively and easily discovered themselves, as they are also here, and the Images were just; and therefore when a malicious, but foolish writer, in the abundance of his Gall, spoke of the *Quixotism* of *R. Crusoe*, as he called it, he shewed evidently that he knew nothing of what he said, and perhaps will be a little startled when I shall tell him, that what was meant for a Satyr, was the greatest of Panegyrics. . . . The Adventures of *Robinson*

Crusoe are one whole Scheme of real Life of eight-and-twenty Years, spent in the most wandering desolate and afflicting Circumstances that ever Man went through, and in which I have liv'd so long in a Life of Wonders, in continu'd Storms, and fought with the worst kind of Savages and Man-eaters, by unaccountable surprising Incidents; fed by Miracles greater than that of Ravens, suffered all Manner of Violences and Oppressions, injurious Reproaches, contempt of Men, Attacks of Devils, Corrections from Heaven, and Oppositions on Earth; have had innumerable Ups and Downs in Matters of Fortune; been in worse Slavery than Turkish; escaped by as exquisite Management as that in the story of *Xury* and the Boat at *Sallee;* been taken up at Sea in Distress; rais'd again, and depress'd again, and that oftner, perhaps, in one Man's Life than ever was known before; Shipwreck'd often, tho' more by Land than by Sea; in a Word, there's not a Circumstance in the imaginary Story but has its just Allusion to a real Story, and chimes, Part for Part, and Step for Step, with the inimitable life of *Robinson Crusoe.*"

No statement could well be more distinct than that, and I confess I see no reason for casting discredit upon its even literal accuracy. "Robinson Crusoe" is indeed what Mr. Forster calls it, "the romance of solitude and self-sustainment, and could only so perfectly have been written by a man whose own life had for the most part been passed in the independence of unaided thought, accustomed to great reverses, of inexhaustible resources in confronting calamities, leaning over his Bible in sober and satisfied belief, and not afraid at any

time to find himself Alone, in communion with nature and with God." The career of Defoe, whose ideas and aims were so far in advance of his contemporaries, had been one of almost absolute isolation, and no doubt much of the intense reality that characterizes his famous work was owing to the striking sympathy with which he was able to follow the fortunes of his hero. He had known what it was to be a political prisoner,* and it is not fanciful to suppose, as a recent writer has suggested, that confinement in his prison is represented in his book by confinement in an island. "In other words, this novel, too, like many of the best ever written, has in it something of the autobiographical element, which makes a man speak from greater depths of feeling than in a purely imaginary story."†

At the same time, it has always been a matter of belief that the origin of "Robinson Crusoe" is to be found in the adventures of Alexander Selkirk, a Scotch seaman, on the island of Juan Fernandez. It is probable that the interest of Defoe had previously been awakened by those stories of maritime adventure‡

* "'Tis as reasonable," says Defoe, in the same Preface, "to represent one kind of Imprisonment by another, as it is to represent any Thing that really exists by what exists not. Had the common way of writing a Man's private History been taken, and I had given you the conduct or life of a Man you know, and whose Misfortunes and Infirmities perhaps you had sometimes unjustly triumphed over; all I could have said would have yielded no Diversion, and perhaps scarce have obtained a reading, or at best no attention. The Teacher, *like a greater*, having no Honour in his own country."

† Leslie Stephen, "Hours in a Library."

‡ "The conception of a solitary mariner thrown on an uninhabited island was one," says Professor Masson, "as really belonging to the fact of that time as those which formed the subject of De Foe's less read fictions of coarse English life. Dampier and the bucaniers

in the days of Elizabeth which still stir the soul of Englishmen, to use a fine expression of Sir Philip Sidney's, like a trumpet. But the curious experiences of Selkirk, related as they were, first, in Captain Woodes Rogers' "Cruising Voyage Round the World," in 1712; afterwards, in a volume published by Captain Edward Cooke, in the same year; and finally, by Sir Richard Steele in No. 26 of the *Englishman* published in 1710,* could scarcely have failed to have come to the knowledge of Defoe, and to have suggested the notion of his solitary on a desert island.

I do not propose, indeed, to enter at any length into a narrative of the career of Selkirk; but I think a few particulars may be stated for the guidance of those who may like to judge for themselves how far Defoe was indebted to the real Crusoe.

The circumstances of Selkirk's stay on Juan Fernandez were as follows:—Born in 1676, at Largo, a small seaport town on the coast of Fife, he was the seventh son and seventh child of John Selcraig and his wife, Euphan Mackie, and, according to a venerable superstition, was fated from his birth to be the hero of extraordinary adventures. He early displayed much quickness of intelligence, as well as considerable waywardness of temper, and set the seal on various juvenile enormities by going off to sea in 1695, wandering

were roving the South Seas, and there yet remained parts of the land surface of the earth of which man had not taken possession, and on which sailors were occasionally thrown adrift by the brutality of captains."

* "Do you know," writes Lamb to one of Defoe's biographers, "the paper in the *Englishman* by Sir Richard Steele, giving an account of Selkirk? It is admirable, and has all the germs of 'Crusoe.'"

about for six years in every imaginable quarter of the globe, and doubtless acquiring no inconsiderable knowledge of nautical affairs and things in general. He returned to Largo in 1701; but, being apparently unable to remain in peace with his brethren, once more quitted the scene of his youthful follies, and went to England with the view of engaging himself on board some ship destined to cruise against the Spanish possessions in the Southern Seas. Here he fell in with the notorious bucanier, Dampier, who was organizing an expedition against certain Spanish galleons of great value that he imagined to be stationed in the river Plata. With him Selkirk accordingly set sail in 1703; Dampier in command of a ship called the *St. George*, Selkirk as sailing master of a ship called the *Cinque Ports*, with one Charles Pickering as captain, and one Thomas Stradling as lieutenant. On the 24th of November of the same year the ships anchored at La Granda, in Brazil, where Captain Pickering died, and the command devolved upon Lieutenant Stradling, who seems to have been a man of arbitrary and violent disposition. With him, Selkirk found it impossible to agree, and when, on anchoring for a second time off Juan Fernandez, he heard from two of his sailors who had been left there on the previous visit, a glowing description of the island, he determined to leave the vessel, and take his chance of securing a return to England in some passing ship. Accordingly, when the galley was fully refitted, it was loaded with all his effects, and he leaped on shore in a temporary transport of joy and freedom. He shook hands with his comrades, and bade them adieu in a hearty manner; but

no sooner, says Howell,* did the dip of their oars, as they left the beach, sound upon his ears, than the horrors of being alone, cut off from all human society, perhaps for ever, rushed upon his mind. His heart sank within him, and all his resolution failed. He rushed into the water, and implored those on board to take him with them. But Stradling laughed at his entreaties, and declared that his present situation was the most proper for so discontented and rebellious an individual.

The manner in which he supported himself on the island, until taken up five years afterwards by an expedition sent against the French and Spanish, by some Bristol merchants, may best and briefly be told in the simple and graphic description of Woodes Rogers.

It appears that Selkirk had with him his clothes and bedding, with a firelock, some powder, bullets, and tobacco, a hatchet, a knife, a kettle, a Bible, some practical pieces, and his mathematical instruments and books. He diverted and provided for himself as well as he could; but, for the first eight months, had much ado to bear up against melancholy, and the terror of being left alone in such a desolate place. He built two huts with pimento-trees, covered with long grass, and lined them with the skins of goats, which he killed with his gun as he wanted, so long as his powder lasted, which was but a pound; and that being almost spent, he obtained fire by rubbing two sticks of pimento-wood together upon his knee. In the lesser hut, at some distance from the other, he dressed his victuals; and in the larger he slept, and employed

* Howell, "Life of Alexander Selkirk." (1829.)

himself in reading, singing psalms, and praying, so that, he said, he was a better Christian while in this solitude than he ever was before, or than, he was afraid, he should ever be again. It was at this time, more than at any other, that he could have sung, as he was afterwards made to sing by Cowper:—

> "Religion! what treasure untold
> Resides in that heavenly word!
> More precious than silver and gold,
> Or all that this earth can afford.
> But the sound of the church-going bell
> These valleys and rocks never heard,
> Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
> Nor smiled when a Sabbath appeared."

At first he never ate anything till hunger constrained him, partly for grief, and partly for want of bread and salt; nor did he go to bed until he could watch no longer. The pimento-wood, which burned very clearly, served him both for fire and candle, and refreshed him with its fragrant smell. He might have had fish enough, but would not eat them for want of salt, because they occasioned a looseness, except crayfish, which were as large as lobsters, and very good. These he sometimes boiled, and at other times broiled, as he did his goats' flesh, of which he made very good broth. He kept an account of five hundred goats that he killed while there, and caught as many more, which he marked on the ear, and then let go. When his powder failed, he took them by speed of foot; for his way of living—continual exercise in walking and running—bared him, says our authority, of all gross humours, so that he ran with wonderful swiftness through the woods and up the rocks and hills. He afterwards told

how his agility in pursuing a goat had once like to have cost him his life. He pursued it with so much eagerness, that he caught hold of it on the brink of a precipice, of which he was not aware, the bushes hiding it from him, so that he fell with the goat down the precipice, a great height, and was so stunned and bruised with the fall that he narrowly escaped with his life; and when he came to his senses, he found the goat dead under him. He lay there about twenty-four hours, and was scarce able to crawl to his hut, which was about a mile distant, or to stir abroad again in ten days.

He came at last to relish his meat well enough without salt and bread; and, in the season, had plenty of good turnips, which had been sown there by Dampier's men, and had, at the end of the five years, overspread some acres of ground. He had enough of good cabbage from the cabbage-trees, and seasoned his meat with the fruit of the pimento-trees, which is the same as Jamaica pepper, and smells deliciously. He also found a black pepper, called Malageta.

He soon wore out all his shoes and clothes by running in the woods; and, at last, being forced to shift without them, his feet became so hard that he ran everywhere without difficulty, and it was some time before he could wear shoes after he was found by Woodes Rogers; for, not being used to any for so long a time, his feet swelled when he first came to wear them again.

After he had conquered his melancholy, he diverted himself sometimes by cutting his name upon the trees, and the time of his being left, and continuance there.

He was at first much pestered by cats and rats, which bred in great numbers from some of each species that had got ashore from ships that put in there to wood and water. The rats gnawed his feet and clothes while he was asleep, which obliged him to cherish the cats with his goats' flesh, by which many of them became so tame that they would lie about him in hundreds, and soon delivered him from the rats. He likewise tamed some kids, and, to divert himself, would now and then sing and dance with them and his cats; so that, by the favour of Providence, and vigour of his youth, being then but thirty years old, he came at last to conquer all the inconveniences of his solitude, and to be very easy.

When he first came on board of Woodes Rogers' ship, he had so far forgot his native language, that he could scarcely be understood. He seemed, says the narrator, to speak his words by halves. They offered him a dram, but he would not touch it, having drank nothing but water since left on the island; and it was some time before he could relish their victuals.

The story of his delivery is told by Howell.* Selkirk, it appears, could scarcely believe the vessels he saw coming in sight were real, for he had often been deceived before. But gradually they approached the island, and he at length ascertained them to be English. "Great was the tumult of passions that rose in his mind; but the love of home overpowered them all. It was late in the afternoon when they first came in sight; and lest

* See, also, "Providence Displayed; or, the Remarkable Adventures of Alexander Selkirk," by Isaac James, of Bristol (1800), and "Crusoniana," by Lieut.-Col. Thomas Sutcliffe, Governor of Juan Fernandez (1843).

they should sail again without knowing that there was a person on the island, he prepared a quantity of wood to burn as soon as it was dark. He kept his eye fixed upon them until night-fall, and then kindled his fire, and kept it up till morning dawned. His hopes and fears having banished all desire for sleep, he employed himself in killing several goats, and in preparing an entertainment for his expected guests, knowing how acceptable it would be to them after their long run, with nothing but salt provisions to live upon."

The next day, about noon, Woodes Rogers sent a boat on shore, and the reader can imagine how eagerly Selkirk would hasten to welcome his fellow-countrymen. He embraced them one after another; but, at first, excess of joy fettered his voice, and he could not speak. He had at this time his last shirt upon his back; his feet and legs were bare; the skins of wild animals partly covered his thighs and body. His beard was of patriarchal length, and a rough goat's skin cap covered his unkempt locks. After the first transports of delight were over, he plied the newcomers with questions; and, curiosity having been satisfied on both sides, the boat's crew returned to the ship, taking Selkirk with them. For ten days, the expedition remained at the island, refitting and collecting supplies of water, fuel, and fresh meat, and then Selkirk bade final adieu to the singular and romantic life which was destined to suggest to a man of genius one of the finest and most popular romances in the English language.

It would be interesting to know whether Defoe was acquainted with the story of that Spanish sailor, called

Peter Serrano, who was cast upon one of the cluster of islands now called the Serrano Keys, lying in the Caribbean Sea, about two degrees further south and eighteen degrees further east than the locality attributed to Crusoe's island. The narrative is contained in the well-known book, published in 1688, called "The Royal Commentaries of Peru, written originally in Spanish by the Don Garcillasso de la Vega, and rendered into English by Sir Paul Rycaut, Kt." Serrano's experience was, however, so far distinct from that of Selkirk, that he was wrecked on an island where there was neither water, wood, nor grass, nor anything for the support of human life. It is described as covered all over with a dead sand; so that all Serrano's nourishment was obtained from the sea. Having contrived to kindle a fire by means of flints, he gathered a great quantity of sea-weed, thrown up by the waves, which, with the shells of fish, and the planks of ships which had been wrecked on these shoals, afforded the requisite fuel, and, lest sudden showers should extinguish the blaze, he made a little covering, like a small hut, with the shells of the largest turtles or tortoises that he killed. In the space of two months, or sooner, he was as unprovided with everything as he was at first; for, with the great rains, heat, and moisture of that climate, his provisions were corrupted; and the rays of the sun poured down so strongly upon him, who had neither clothes to cover nor shadow to shelter him, that when he was, as it were, broiled by the exceeding heat, he had no remedy but to run into the sea. In this misery and care, says his historian, he passed three years, during which time he saw several

ships at sea, and often made his smoke; but none turned out of their way to see what it meant, for fear of those shelves and sands which wary pilots avoid with all imaginable circumstance; so that the poor wretch, despairing of all manner of relief, esteemed it a mercy for him to die, and arrive at that period which could only put an end to his miseries.

At the end of the three years, an accident occurred which bears, I think, a remarkable resemblance to a similar scene in "Robinson Crusoe." Serrano, we are told, was one day "strangely surprised with the appearance of a man on his island, whose ship had the night before been cast away upon the sands, and had saved himself on the plank of a vessel. So soon as it was day, he espied the smoke, and, imagining where it was, made towards it. So soon as they saw each other, it is hard to say which was the most amazed. Serrano imagined it was the Devil who came in the shape of a man to tempt him to despair. The new-comer believed Serrano to be the Devil in his own proper shape and figure, being covered over with hair and beard; in fine, they were both afraid, flying one from the other. Peter Serrano cried out as he ran, 'Jesus, Jesus, deliver me from the Devil!' The other, hearing this, took courage, and returning again to him, called out, 'Brother, brother, don't fly from me, for I am a Christian as thou art!' and, because he saw that Serrano still ran from him, he repeated the *Credo*, or Apostles' Creed, in words aloud; which, when Serrano heard, he knew it was no devil would recite those words, and thereupon gave a stop to his flight, and returning to him, with great kindness they embraced

each other with sighs and tears, lamenting their sad estate without any hopes of deliverance."

It was on the 25th of April, 1719, thirty-one years after the publication of the above, and six years after Steele recounted in the *Englishman* his conversation with the seaman Selkirk, that the first volume of "Robinson Crusoe" was given to the world. The title-page ran as follows:—"The Life and Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner: Who lived Eight and Twenty Years, all alone in an uninhabited Island on the Coast of America, near the Mouth of the Great River Oroonoque; Having been cast on Shore by Shipwreck, wherein all the Men perished but himself. With An Account how he was at last as strangely deliver'd by Pyrates. Written by Himself. London. Printed for W. Taylor at the Ship in Pater-Noster Row. MDCCXIX." The Preface was written by Defoe in the character of the editor of the work, and was thus worded:—"If ever the Story of any private Man's Adventures in the World were worth making Public, and were acceptable when Publish'd, the Editor of this Account thinks this will be so. The Wonders of this Man's Life exceed all that (he thinks) is to be found extant; the Life of one Man being scarce capable of a greater Variety. The Story is told with Modesty, with Seriousness, and with a Religious Application of Events the Uses to which wise Men always apply them (viz.) to the Instruction of others by this Example, and to justify and honour the Wisdom of Providence in all the Variety of our Circumstances, let them happen how they will. The Editor believes the thing

to be a just History of fact; neither is there any Appearance of Fiction in it: And however thinks, because all such things are dispatch'd, that the Improvement of it, as well to the Diversion, as to the Instruction of the Reader, will be the same; and as such, he thinks, without farther Compliment to the World, he does them a great Service in the Publication."

This first volume was, as everybody knows, so extremely and immediately popular, that a second edition was issued on the 12th of May, only seventeen days after the first; a third appeared on the 6th of June; a spurious one was published on the 7th of August; and a fifth (the fourth authorised one) was sent forth on the following day.

Meanwhile the author had been busy with the preparation of his second volume, which appeared on the 20th of August, with the following title-page:—"The Farther Adventures of Robinson Crusoe; being the Second and Last Part of his Life, and of the Strange Surprising Account of his Travels Round Three Parts of the Globe. Written by Himself. To which is added a Map of the World, in which is delineated the Voyages of Robinson Crusoe. London: Printed for W. Taylor at the Ship in Pater-Noster Row. MDCCXIX." The Preface said, "The Success the former Part of this Work has met with in the World, has yet been no other than is acknowledg'd to be due to the surprising Variety of the Subject, and to the agreeable Manner of the Performance. All the Endeavours of Envious People to reproach it with being a Romance, to search for Errors in Geography,

Inconsistency in the Relation, and Contradictions in the Fact, have proved abortive, and as impotent as malicious. The just Application of every Incident, the religious and useful Inferences drawn from every Part, are so many Testimonies to the Good Design of making it Public, and must legitimate all the Part that may be called Invention, or Parable in the Story. The Second Part, if the Editor's opinion may pass, is (contrary to the Usage of Second Parts) every way as entertaining as the First, contains as strange and surprising Incidents, and as great Variety of them; nor is the Application less serious, or suitable; and doubtless will, to the sober, as well as ingenious Reader, be every-way as profitable and diverting; and this makes the abridging this Work, as scandalous, as it is knavish and ridiculous; seeing, while to shorten the Book, that they may seem to reduce the Value, they strip it of all those Reflections, as well religious as moral, which are not only the greatest Beauties of the Work, but are calculated for the infinite Advantage of the Reader. By this they leave the Work naked of its brightest Ornaments; and if they would, at the same Time pretend, that the Author has supply'd the Story out of his Invention, they take from it the Improvement, which alone recommends that Invention to wise and good Men. The Injury these Men do the Proprietor of this Work, is a practice all honest Men abhor; and he believes he may challenge them to show the Difference between that and Robbing on the Highway, or Breaking open a House. If they can't show any Difference in the Crime, they will find it hard to show why there should

be any Difference in the Punishment: And he will answer for it, that nothing shall be wanting on his Part, to do them Justice."

During the same year, 1719, both first and second volumes were translated into German and French; and they were reprinted, in weekly portions, from the 7th of October, 1719, to the 19th of October, 1720, in a newspaper called "The Original London Post, or Heathcote's Intelligencer."

Since then, the editions of "Robinson Crusoe" have been more numerous than I can possibly mention. The fifth authorised edition was an abridgment, in one volume, published in 1720; the sixth, in two volumes, in 1721; the seventh in 1722, and the eighth, in two volumes, with fourteen copper plates, in the course of the same year. After this, the reprints became countless, and the variety of the foreign translations is equally remarkable. Not only has almost every living language produced a version of Defoe's romance, but it has appeared in the classical languages of Greece and Rome.*

A still more striking testimony to the influence of "Robinson Crusoe" is to be found in the number of imitations of which it has formed the subject, and of which I may briefly indicate a few.

1. "The Adventures and Surprizing Deliverance of James Dubourdieu and his Wife, from the uninhabited Part of the Island of Paradise, &c. Also the Adven-

* "'Robinson Crusoe,'" says Mr. Forster, "is a standard piece in every European language; its popularity has extended to every civilised nation. The traveller Burckhardt found it translated into Arabic, and heard it read aloud among the wandering tribes in the cool of the evening."

tures of Alexander Vendchurch, set on Shore on an Island in the South Sea," &c. Here, "Vendchurch" is obviously a travestied synonym for "Sel-kirk." Published in October, 1719.

2. "The Life and Strange Surprizing Adventures of Major Alexander Ramkins," &c. Published in December, 1719.

3. "The Voyages, Travels, and Dangerous Adventures of Captain Richard Falconer," &c. Also published in December, 1719.

Defoe himself further contributed to this sort of literature by writing—

4. "The King of Pirates: Being an Account of the Famous Enterprises of Captain Avery, the Mock King of Madagascar," &c. Published in December, 1719. And again, by writing—

5. "The Life, Adventures and Piracies of the Famous Captain Singleton," &c. Published in June, 1720, and accounted one of the best of Defoe's minor works.

6. "The Voyages and Adventures of Miles Phillips, a West Country Sailor, &c. Written by Himself," &c. Published in February, 1724.

7. "The Strange Adventures and Signal Deliverances of Mr. Philip Ashton, Jun., &c., who lived alone upon a Desolate Island in the Gulph of Honduras, for about Sixteen Months."

8. "The Voyages and Adventures of Captain Robert Boyle," &c. Published in March, 1726.

9. "Travels into several Remote Nations of the World, by Lemuel Gulliver." Published in October, 1726, and evidently suggested by Defoe's romance,

though otherwise so strikingly original as scarcely to deserve the name of imitation.

10. "The Hermit: or, the Unparalleled Sufferings and Surprizing Adventures of Mr. Philip Quarll, an Englishman. Who was discovered by Mr. Dorrington, a Bristol Merchant, upon an uninhabited Island in the South Sea; where he has lived above Fifty Years, without any human Assistance, still continues to reside, and will not come away," &c. This, with one exception, to be hereafter mentioned, is the most able and popular of the imitations of Crusoe, and has been frequently reprinted. It appeared in 1727.*

11. "A Voyage to Cacklogallinia. By Captain S. Brunt." Published in July, 1727.

12. "The Pleasant and Surprizing Adventures of Mr. Robert Drury, during his Fifteen Years' Captivity on the Island of Madagascar," &c. Published in May, 1729. And, lastly—

13. "The Life and Adventures of Peter Wilkins, a Cornish Man. Taken from his own Mouth, in his Passage to England from off Cape Horn in America, in the Ship *Hector*." Written by Robert Pultock, and published in 1750.

The latter is a very curious work indeed, almost deserving a chapter to itself; but probably the book which, written in avowed imitation of Defoe, has obtained the largest acceptance among English readers, is, "The Swiss Family Robinson; or, The Adventures of a Shipwrecked Family on a Desolate Island,"

* "I do not know," says Lamb, "who wrote 'Quarl.' I never thought of 'Quarl' as having an author. It is a poor imitation; the monkey is the best in it, and his pretty dishes made of shells."

written by Joachim Heinrich Kampe, the tutor of Baron Humboldt, and abounding both in instruction and amusement. It is defective as a work of art, on account of its many anachronisms, which were happily exposed by Captain Marryat. "To be sure," says Miss Yonge, "when one comes to think of it, no one but a German could have thought it practicable to land a whole family in a row of washing-tubs nailed together between planks—and the island did contain peculiar fauna and flora; but the book is an extremely engaging one for all that, and one decidedly would prefer reading it at this moment than the rather characterless 'Masterman Ready.'"* "The Swiss Robinson," says M. Nodier, "is Robinson Crusoe in the bosom of his family. Instead of the rash, obstinate sailor who struggles against death in a prolonged agony, it is a father, a mother, their charming children, so different in age, character, and mind, who engage our interest. The new author's combination has changed the entire economy of his fable; it transports you from the final abode of a solitary adventurer to the cradle of human society."†

It is somewhat late in the day, perhaps, to put forward an estimate of so famous a work as this of Defoe's; but, on the other hand, it may not be unprofitable if I put together briefly some of the impressions which the book has made upon our leading critics.

In the first place, then, it is obvious that it is not

* "Macmillan's Magazine," July, 1869.

† In Messrs. Reade and Boucicault's "Foul Play," which is the last of the Crusoe stories worth recording, the hero and heroine are wrecked upon a coral reef, with an attendant who eventually succumbs to hunger and exhaustion.

one to which the grown man is accustomed to turn, as he turns to the novels of a later age. There is much, no doubt, in "Robinson Crusoe" from which the general reader may obtain instruction; but, on the face of it, the story of the mariner of York is one which must always be peculiarly interesting to the youth of all nations. "The universal admiration it has obtained may," says Roscoe, "be the admiration of men; but it is founded on the liking of boys. Few educated men or women would care to read it for the first time after the age of five-and-twenty. Even Lamb could say it only 'holds its place by tough prescription.' The boy revels in it. It furnishes him with food for his imagination in the very direction in which, of all others, it loves to occupy itself. It is not that he cares for Robinson Crusoe—that dull, ingenious, seafaring creature, with his strange mixture of cowardice and boldness, his unleavened, coarsely sagacious, mechanic nature, his keen trade instincts, and his rude religious experiences. The boy becomes his own Robinson Crusoe. It is little Tom Smith himself, curled up in a remote corner of the playground, who makes those troublesome voyages on the raft, and rejoices over the goods he saves from the wreck; who contrives his palisades and twisted cables to protect his cave; clothes himself quaintly in skins; is terrified at the savages; and rejoices in his jurisdiction over the docile Friday, who, he thinks, would be better than a dog, and almost as good as a pony. He does not care a farthing about Crusoe as a separate person from himself. This is one reason why he rejects the religious reflections" [on which, it will be remembered, Defoe

himself professes to lay so much stress, but which, it must be confessed, are not very edifying either to the juvenile or the adult reader] "as a strange and undesirable element in a work otherwise so fascinating. He cannot enter into Crusoe's sense of wickedness, and does not feel the least concern for his soul. If a grown man reads the book in after years, it is to recall the sensations of youth, or curiously to examine the secret of the unbounded popularity it has enjoyed."*

Apart, however, from the way in which the youthful reader identifies himself with Crusoe, it is obviously the exquisite realism of Defoe that attracts him in the first place, and afterwards holds him as if enchained and entranced. Perfection of *vraisemblance*, appropriateness of incident, if not of reflection—that is the great charm of "Robinson Crusoe," and it is that which makes it the best book for boys that was ever written. Of any other quality of the ordinary fictitious narrative it is utterly destitute. It has nothing of imagination proper; it has plenty of invention, of the kind which delights in recording the minutest incidents; but it has none of that poetic glamour that usually gives an interest to fiction; and as for pathos, nothing could well be more absolutely cold-blooded or prosaic than this, the masterpiece of our first great novelist.† As for delineation of character, such as we are accustomed to in the works of Fielding and Smol-

* W. Caldwell Roscoe, "Poems and Essays," ii. 237, 238.

† "Pathos," says Sir Walter Scott, "is not De Foe's general characteristic; he had too little delicacy of mind; when it comes it comes uncalled, and is created by the circumstances, not sought for by the author."

lett, Dickens and Thackeray, there is just as little. Robinson Crusoe, his man Friday, and perhaps Will Atkins and his wife—these still linger in the memories of the man long after he has ceased to be a boy at school. But if they do so linger, it is less as the result of any conscious character-painting on the part of Defoe than on account of the incidents associated with them.

I suppose that even boys, when they come to the first appearance on the island of Robinson Crusoe's countrymen, begin to lose their interest in the narrative of that worthy's troubles. When once he ceases to be a solitary, and is brought again within the range of civilisation, the dramatic interest of the story is, as M. Nodier well remarks, at an end. "Robinson Crusoe has his fields, his plantations, his houses, his kingdom. The new-comers will be his workmen, his servants, his tenants, his subjects. The dearest necessities of the heart, nevertheless, are forgotten in Defoe's immortal work; you nowhere hear the consoling voice of woman, or the delightful prattle of children, you love nobody, not even Crusoe; the sympathy which attracts you to him throughout his heroic struggle with destiny is not the result of any tender feeling; it is simply the involuntary reaction of your thought upon yourself; it is that universal instinct of egotism or pity which associates you in imagination with the sufferings you yourself might have undergone. And would you know up to what point Crusoe has really interested you, how great an abstraction has been produced by the desolate position in which the romancist has placed him? Ask yourself what becomes of him

when he quits his island, and admit, frankly, that you have never cared to ascertain." *

All the critics are agreed as to the comparative want of interest in the "farther adventures" of "Robinson Crusoe." Defoe himself seems clearly to have seen the risk he ran in attempting to prolong his first success, and his anxiety was only too well founded. "The second part," says Sir Walter Scott, "though containing many passages which display the author's genius, does not rise high in character above the 'Memoirs of Captain Singleton,' or the other imaginary voyages of the author." "When we get to the second part," says Mr. Leslie Stephen, "with the Spaniards and Will Atkins talking natural theology to his wife, it sinks to the level of the secondary stories."

It only remains for me to contrast the celebrated tribute of Rousseau with the less flattering criticism of one of the greatest of Defoe's successors.

"Since we must have books," says the author of "Emile," "this is one which, in my opinion, is a most excellent treatise on natural education. This is the first my Emilius shall read; his whole library shall long consist of this work only, which shall preserve an eminent rank to the very last. It shall be the text to which all our conversations on natural science are to serve only as a comment. It shall be our guide during our progress to maturity of judgment; and so long as our taste is not adulterated, the perusal of this book shall afford us pleasure. And what surprising book is this? Is it Aristotle? Is it Pliny? Is it Buffon? No; it is 'Robinson Crusoe.' The value and importance of

the various arts are ordinarily estimated, not according to their real utility, but by the gratification which they administer to the fantastic desires of mankind. But Emilius shall be taught to view them in a different light; 'Robinson Crusoe' shall teach him to value the stock of an ironmonger above that of the most magnificent toy-shop in Europe."

"You remember," says Dickens, writing to his friend, Mr. Forster, "my saying to you some time ago how curious I thought it that 'Robinson Crusoe' should be the only instance of an universally popular book that could make no one laugh and could make no one cry. I have been reading it again just now, in the course of my numerous refreshments at those English wells, and I will venture to say there is not in literature a more surprising instance of an utter want of tenderness and sentiment, than the death of Friday. It is as heartless as 'Gil Blas,' in a very different and far more serious way. But the second part altogether will not bear inquiry. In the second part of 'Don Quixote' are some of the finest things. But the second part of 'Robinson Crusoe' is perfectly contemptible, in the glaring defect that it exhibits the man who was thirty years on that desert island with no visible effect made on his character by that experience. Defoe's women, too—Robinson Crusoe's wife, for instance—are dull commonplace fellows without breeches."*

The "Serious Reflections," from the Preface of which I have already quoted, were published in 1720,

elaborate morals from the life of Crusoe than had been attempted in the original work. "Here," says Defoe, in the person of Crusoe, "is the just and only good End of all Parable or Allegorick History brought to pass, *viz.*, for moral and religious improvement. Here is invincible Patience recommended under the worst of Misery; indefatigable Application and undaunted Resolution under the greatest and most discouraging Circumstances; I say, these are recommended, as the only Way to work through those Miseries, and their Success appears sufficient to support the most dead-hearted Creature in the World."

The full title runs:—"Serious Reflections during the Life and Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe: with his Vision of the Angelick World. Written by Himself. London: Printed for W. Taylor, at the Ship & Black-Swan in Pater-noster-Row. 1720."

The "Serious Reflections" have this introduction:—"I must have made very little Use of my solitary and wandering Years, if after such a Scene of Wonders, as my Life may justly be call'd, I had nothing to say, and had made no Observations which might be useful and instructing, as well as pleasant and diverting to those that are to come after me." Thereafter follows Chapter I., in which Crusoe treats "of Solitude," and points out "how incapable" it is "to make us happy, and how unqualify'd to a Christian life." The second chapter is "An Essay upon Honesty," discoursing first upon "Honesty in General;" then of "the Tryal of Honesty," concerning which the propositions are laid down, "that 'tis an easy thing to maintain the Character of Honesty and

Uprightness, when a Man has no Business to be employ'd in, and no Want to press him," and "that when Exigences and Distresses pinch a Man, then is the Time to prove the Honesty of his Principle;" then "of Honesty in Promises," in which it is observed that "he who is forward to reproach the Infirmities of other Men's Honesty, is very near a Breach of his own," that "he that hastily reproaches Another without sufficient Ground, cannot be an honest Man," and that "where there may be sufficient Ground of Reproach, yet an Honest Man is always tender of his Neighbour's Character from the Sense of his own Frailty;" and then "of Relative Honesty." The third chapter treats "of the Immorality of Conversation, and the Vulgar Errors of Behaviour," and takes up the subject under the several heads of "unfitting our selves for Conversation," of "the Immorality of Conversation in General," of "reforming the Errors of Conversation," of "Atheistical and Prophane Discourse," of "Lewd and Immodest Discourse," and of "Talking Falsely." The fourth chapter, devoted generally to "An Essay on the present State of Religion in the World," takes up such matters as "Differences in Religion" and the "wonderful Excellency of Negative Religion and Negative Virtue," and includes some remarkable verses by Defoe on such solemn and tremendous subjects as "Faith" and "Eternity." The fifth chapter is "Of listening to the Voice of Providence," including the propositions "that this Eternal God guides by his Providence the whole World, which He has created by his Power," and "that this Providence manifests a Particular Care over, and

Concern in, the governing and directing Man, the best and last created Creature on Earth;" lastly, that "there is scarce any particular Providence attends our Lives, but we shall find, in giving due Weight to it, that it calls upon us, either (1) To *look up*, and acknowledge the Goodness of God in sparing us, the Bounty of God in providing for us, the Power of God in delivering and protecting us, not forgetting to look up, and acknowledge, and be humble under the Justice of God, in being angry with, and afflicting us. (2) Or to *look out*, and take the needful Caution and Warning given of evil approaching, and prepare either to meet or avoid it. (3) Or to *look in*, and reflect upon what we find Heaven animadverting upon, and afflicting us for, taking Notice of the Summons to repent and reform." The sixth, and last, chapter, "Of the Proportion between the Christian and Pagan World," is remarkable for the passage in which the writer says, "I, Robinson Crusoe, grown old in affliction, born down by Calumny and Reproach, but supported from within, boldly prescribe this Remedy against universal Clamours and Contempt of Mankind; Patience, a steady Life of Vertue and Sobriety, and a comforting Dependance on the Justice of Providence, will first or last restore the Patient to the Opinion of his Friends, and justify him in the Face of his Enemies, and, in the meantime, will support him comfortably, in despising those who want Manners and Charity, and leave them to be cursed from Heaven with their own Passions and Rage." Here it is evident that the writer is drawing, more than anywhere, upon the unhappy, but not ignoble, experiences of his own career.

Of his "Vision of the Angelick World," I have no room to speak, further than to quote the few opening sentences of the work, in which Defoe explains the object with which it had been written. "They," he says, "must be much taken up with the satisfaction of what they are already, that never spare their Thoughts upon the Subject of what they shall be. The Place, the Company, the Employment which we expect to know so much hereafter, must certainly be worth our while to enquire after here." Therefore he will "endeavour to reason upon them clearly, and, if possible, convey some such Ideas of the invisible World to the Thoughts of Men, as may not be confused and indigested, and so leave them darker than I found them." He does not perhaps leave us darker than he found us, but he leaves us equally dark; though the "Vision" is by no means destitute of interest to the curious in such speculations.

Not the least remarkable portion of the book, it may be added, is the map of Crusoe's island, which forms the frontispiece of the volume. It is so utterly out of proportion that it defies description; but it is very amusing, and should be reproduced, I think, in every future edition of the great work of fiction which it professes to illustrate.

CHESTERFIELD'S "LETTERS."

"THE name of Chesterfield," says Mr. Hayward, "has become a synonym for good breeding and politeness. It is associated in our minds with all that is graceful in manner and cold in heart, attractive in appearance and unamiable in reality. The image it calls up is that of a man rather below the middle height, in a court suit and blue riband, with regular features, wearing an habitual expression of gentlemanlike ease. His address is insinuating, his bow is perfect, his compliments rival those of *Le Grand Monarque* in delicacy: laughter is too demonstrative for him, but the smile of courtesy is ever on his lip; and by the time he has gone through the circle, the avowed object of his daily ambition is accomplished—all the women are already half in love with him, and every man is desirous to be his friend."

The description, so far as it goes, is not inapplicable. The pity is that it should occasionally err so seriously, and that it should entirely omit those particulars on which the fame of Chesterfield ought by

he was cold in heart. So far is this from the case, that, on one human being at least, he lavished an amount of affection such as is rarely witnessed in the intercourse of fathers and sons; and, so far as history tells us, he never acted ungenerously by man or woman. He may have been, and I believe he was, attractive in appearance, but that he was unamiable in reality is nowhere stated. There is no necessary connection between the politeness of which we know Chesterfield was a master, and the insincerity of which he is generally suspected. On the contrary, it is the essence of politeness that it should proceed from a desire to put one's fellow-creatures at their ease, and good breeding is supposed to show itself in no way more strikingly than in courteous consideration of other people's feelings. I am afraid that when people talk of a bow or of a smile that is worthy of a Chesterfield, they refer to the bow which is only one of ironical deference, and a smile which has more of sarcasm than good humour. But in neither case does the reference display an accurate knowledge of the distinguished statesman, the brilliant orator, the graceful essayist, and the elegant wit, whose name is so frequently and so ignorantly taken in vain.

Philip Dormer Stanhope, Earl of Chesterfield, was born on the 22nd of September, 1694, and was, I need scarcely say, the descendant of an illustrious race. Yet he had none of that excessive veneration for "the claims of high descent" that is usually attributed to men of noble family. He is said to have placed among the portraits of his ancestors the figures of a man and a woman, labelled respectively Adam de Stanhope and

Eve de Stanhope, by which means he successfully preserved himself from any ridiculous genealogical pretensions. Perhaps he found his natural tendency to admiration and belief in his progenitors arrested by the unattractiveness of his father, who is described as a man of morose disposition and of violent passions. From him, young Stanhope could hope for little attention, and his education therefore devolved almost entirely upon the energies of his grandmother, Lady Halifax, who, on the contrary, is described as a woman of conduct, understanding, and sensibility, and whose house was the resort of the leading people of the time. He was himself, it seems, most anxious to acquire information, and no doubt he took advantage of every opportunity afforded him. "He was very young," says Dr. Maty, "when Lord Galway—who, though not a very fortunate General, was a man of uncommon penetration and merit, and who often visited the Marchioness of Halifax—observing in him a strong inclination for a political life, but at the same time an ungovernable taste for pleasure, with some tincture of laziness, gave him the following advice:—'If you intend to be a man of business you must be an early riser. In the distinguished posts your parts, rank, and fortune will entitle you to fill, you will be liable to have visitors every day, and unless you will rise constantly at an early hour you will never have any leisure to yourself.'"* He took the hint, and acted upon it through life; nor, though his education till his eighteenth year was strictly private, does he appear ever to have wanted the spur of emulation which it is

* "Life," prefixed to "Miscellaneous Works," ed. 1777.

thought the peculiar privilege of a public school to apply.* "When I was at your age," he tells his son, then eleven, "I should have been ashamed if any boy of that age had learned his book better, or played at any play better than I did; and I should not have rested a moment till I had got before him."

When he was eighteen he went to Trinity College, Cambridge, and studied there civil laws and philosophy, attending also the mathematical classes of Saunderson, the blind professor. He read Greek fluently, and sent accounts of his progress in French to his old tutor, M. Joumeau, a French clergyman and refugee. "Lord Chesterfield," says M. Sainte Beuve, "had, when a child, learnt our tongue from a Norman nurse who attended him;" and though he spoke it beautifully, it was always with a perceptible Norman accent. There is a curious passage in one of his letters to his tutor, where he says, "I find this college infinitely the best in the whole university, for it is the smallest, and it is filled with lawyers, who have been in the world and understand life. We have but one clergyman, who is also the only man in the college who gets drunk. Let them say what they will, there is very little debauchery in this university, and particularly among the people of condition, for it requires the taste of a porter to put up with it here." Here, I think, may be discerned, thus early, the desire to "understand life," and to avoid the coarser forms of pleasure, which Chesterfield afterwards endeavoured to instil into his son. The sentence about the clergyman is also very characteristic of the times.

* Hayward's "Essays," First Series.

Chesterfield remained two years at college, and then, like all young noblemen of that period, started on a grand tour of the Continent, though not under the guardianship of a tutor. He went from Holland to Italy, and from Italy to France, and wrote from Paris, in 1714, to say that he was continually being taken for a Frenchman, yet he had evidently not acquired that air and deportment for which the Parisian gentleman was then, as now, distinguished, or, when he made his appearances in their society, he would probably have suffered less from *mauvaise honte* than appears to have been the case with him at first. He himself tells the story of how he once was bold enough to go up to a lady, and to tell her he thought it was a warm day, and how, having said so much as that, all further conversation suddenly ceased, so far as *he* was concerned. Happily, the lady was good enough to talk to *him*, and said, "I see your embarrassment, and I am sure the few words you said to me cost you a good deal; but do not be discouraged for that reason, and avoid good company. We see that you desire to please, and that is the main point; you want only the manner, and you think that you want it still more than you do. You must go through your noviciate before you can profess good breeding; and, if you will be my novice, I will present you to my acquaintance as such."

"You will easily imagine," says Chesterfield, "how much this speech pleased me, and how awkwardly I answered it. I hemmed once or twice (for it gave me a burr in my throat) before I could tell her that I was very much obliged to her; that it was true I had a

good deal of reason to distrust my own behaviour, not being used to fine company; and that I should be proud of being her novice and receiving her instructions. As soon as I had fumbled out this answer she called up three or four people, and said, 'Sçavez-vous' (for she was a foreigner, and I was abroad), 'que j'ai entrepris ce jeune homme et qu'il le faut rassurer? Pour moi, je crois en avoir fait la conquête, car il s'est émancipé dans le moment au point de me dire en tremblant qu'il faisoit chaud. Il faut que vous m'aidiez à le dérouiller. Il lui faut nécessairement une passion, et s'il ne me juge pas digne, nous lui en chercherons quelque autre. Au reste, mon novice, n'allez-vous pas encanailler avec des filles de l'opéra et des comédiennes, qui vous épargneront les frais et du sentiment et de la politesse, mais qui vous en couteront bien plus à tout autre égard.'"

I quote this anecdote so fully because it shows that Chesterfield, in pressing upon his son the necessity of a good address, was arguing from his own experience, and because it affords a defence against the charge of immorality which is so commonly, but unjustly, brought against him. It is true that he advises his son to form a *liaison* with a married woman by way of apprenticeship to the art of pleasing; but we must not, as Mr. Hayward successfully points out, run away with the idea that Lord Chesterfield thought it a becoming thing for a young man to intrude upon the peace of a family, corrupt the mind of a young wife and mother, and lead her to eventual disgrace and ruin. The "Letters" must be read in the light of the times in which they were written—of the times in which it

was the custom of the ladies of fashion to be addicted to gallantry, and when a husband who attempted to interfere with his wife's liberty in this respect would have been regarded as a monster of iniquity. "Il lui faut nécessairement une passion," said Lord Chesterfield's own protectress, "et s'il ne m'en juge pas digne, nous lui en chercherons quelque autre." It was better, she thought, that he should learn the airs and graces of society from the women of his own rank and circle, than that he should fall into the hands of women of equal fascination, but of lower rank and of lower morals. And, therefore, when Chesterfield gave very similar advice to his son, he was only acting like a man of the world, and choosing the lesser of two evils, "just," says Mr. Hayward, "as many a more virtuous father would recommend his son to fight a duel if imperatively required by the law of honour, though perfectly aware that he was recommending an action forbidden by the law of God. Lord Chesterfield may have done wrong; the advice may have been bad advice, particularly as regards the person to whom it was addressed; but we protest against its being argued that he systematically disregarded virtue, or made light of principle, because he submitted to this compromise with expediency."

The death of Queen Anne opened up a new career for every young man of an ambitious turn of mind, and Lord Stanhope (as he was called until the death of his father in 1726) hastened home to offer his allegiance to the Hanoverian dynasty. Strangely enough, however, he was never at any time a successful politician; and though his services were con-

sidered worthy of such rewards as the positions of Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, and Captain of the Yeomen of the Guard, he never made his mark as a speaker in the House of Commons. "He was not fitted, either by nature or study, for a popular assembly. His style wanted the requisite degree of nerve and muscle, as much as his physical frame. His very taste and refinement were against him; and it is impossible to conceive a man succeeding in that House who made it his chief duty to avoid giving way to strong excitement, or engaging in rough competition of any kind." It is also stated by Dr. Maty that there was another reason for his comparative failure as a debater. "There was a member," he says, "of that House, who, though not possessed of superior powers, had the dangerous talent of making those whom he answered appear ridiculous, by imitating their tone and action." Lord Chesterfield, we know, was especially sensitive to ridicule. He says himself, in one of his "Letters," that "ridicule, though not founded upon truth, will stick for some time, and, if thrown by a skilful hand, will stick for ever." And probably he kept silence frequently from the fear of giving occasion for the exercise of his opponent's powers.

When, in 1726, he succeeded to the House of Lords, he found there a much more congenial field for his peculiar genius. There, his high-bred ease, delicate irony, fine humour, persuasive tones, and gracefully flowing periods, were appreciated at their proper worth; he was no longer subjected to coarse freedom or unmannerly interruption; and his total want of

those energetic bursts of feeling and impulsive moments, which are inseparable from the highest efforts of eloquence, was deemed, says one of his biographers, rather a merit than a defect. Yet it cannot be said that he was more successful in the House of Lords than in the House of Commons. It was expected that when George II. came to the throne, Chesterfield would reap the reward of his fidelity to the king when heir-apparent. But he had made the fatal mistake of paying his court to the royal mistresses instead of to *the* royal mistress, the Queen Caroline, who was destined to play so prominent a part in politics during her husband's reign; and Chesterfield was distanced in her good graces by the lumbering but more effective devotion of Sir Robert Walpole. In like manner, his easy address and fascinating conversation were quite powerless at a later period, to prevent the triumph of the Duke of Newcastle. He had been so far recompensed for his efforts that, after the resignation of Lord Carteret in 1744, he came into power as the head of the coalition or "broad bottom" party, and he served first as Ambassador to Holland, then as Lord Lieutenant to Ireland, and lastly as Secretary of State for England. But though at all times a noted politician, whether in office or in opposition, he was never, as Sainte Beuve says, either a powerful or even a very influential minister.

Yet he deserved, I am sure, to obtain more consideration than he did. He was full of political zeal; and Dr. Maty tells an amusing story in illustration of his enthusiasm. "The late Lord R——," he says,

"with many good qualities, and even learning and parts, had a strong desire of being thought skilful in physic, and was very expert in bleeding. Lord Chesterfield, who knew his foible, and on a particular occasion wished to have his vote, came to him one morning, and after having conversed on indifferent matters, complained of headache, and desired his lordship to feel his pulse. It was found to beat high, and a hint of losing blood given. 'I have no objection, and as I hear your lordship has a masterly hand, will you favour me with trying your lancet upon me? *Apropos*,' said Lord Chesterfield, after the operation was over, 'do you go to the House to-day?' Lord R—— answered, 'I did not intend to go, not being sufficiently informed of the question which is to be debated; but you who have considered it, which side will you be of?' The Earl, having gained his confidence, easily directed his judgment; he carried him to the House, and got him to vote as he pleased. He used afterwards to say that none of his friends had done so much as he, having literally bled for the good of his country."

On another occasion, he was chosen, or had volunteered, to obtain the King's assent to an appointment of which His Majesty was known to disapprove. He produced the commission, and on mentioning the name, was angrily refused. "I would rather have the devil," said the King. "With all my heart," said the Earl, "I only beg leave to put your Majesty in mind, that the commission is to be addressed *to our right trusty and well-beloved cousin*." The King laughed, and said, "My lord, do as you please."

I do not propose to lay any stress upon Chesterfield's really remarkable career as Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland, in which capacity he obtained the highest successes of his life. I have to consider him here less as the far-seeing statesman and the brilliant orator, than as the wit and man of the world, who devoted so large a portion of his time and thoughts to the education of his illegitimate son. And, therefore, my object has merely been to show that when in 1732, that son was born, Lord Chesterfield had earned all the experience of men and manners, and acquired all the classical and miscellaneous knowledge, which he was afterwards to utilise perhaps to so little immediate purpose, but with so perceptible an effect upon his subsequent reputation.

Let us endeavour to realise the position of him who thus undertook, in a long series of the most charmingly written letters, to form the mind and character of his favourite child. When Chesterfield began this famous correspondence, he held the distinguished post above referred to, and he continued it long after his appointment to the office of Secretary of State. He was then in the prime of his powers and in the heyday of his success. He was not only a prominent politician, but he was the friend of Pope and Addison, the introducer into England of Montesquieu and Voltaire, the correspondent of Fontenelle and Madame de Tencin, and one of whom Montesquieu could write that nothing was so flattering to him as his approbation, and that nothing could be more instructive to him than his observations upon the famous work, "L'Esprit des Lois," which he had recently published.

"Celebrated," says Mrs. Stanhope,* "all over Europe for his superior Talents as an Epistolary writer, for the brilliancy of his Wit, and the solidity of his extensive Knowledge, will it be thought too presumptuous to assert, that he exerted all those faculties to their utmost, upon his favourite subject—Education? and that, in order to form the Mind of a darling Son, he even exhausted those powers which he was so universally allowed to possess?"

Lord Chesterfield had married, in 1733, Melusina de Schulemberg, the reputed daughter of George I. by the Duchess of Kendal; but, previous to that, he had met at the Hague a Mademoiselle de Bouchet, "a beautiful young lady, a governess or *dame de campagnie*," who "set," says Mr. Friswell,† "her wits against his, and suffered the usual penalty; she fell, and this son, to whom these letters are written, was the result." He was born, as I have said, in 1732, and in 1737, when the boy, who was called Philip Stanhope, was but five years old, his father commenced that work of instruction which was fated to bear him such bitter and such unexpected fruits.

The first few letters are in French, and refer almost entirely to the elements of Greek and Roman mythology, from which the writer selects what he probably thought were the most edifying and most necessary stories. By-and-by, Roman mythology gives way to Roman history, and on July 15th, 1739, Lord Chesterfield writes his first (extant) English letter to his son. He is glad to hear that the boy has been complimented by

* The widow of the recipient of the "Letters."
† Prefatory Remarks to the Bayard edition of the "Letters."

his teacher, but prays he will take care to deserve what is said of him. He is to remember that praise, when it is not deserved, is the severest satire and abuse,* and the most effectual way of exposing people's vices and follies. "This is a figure of speech called irony, which is saying directly the contrary of what you mean; but yet it is not a lie, because you plainly show, that you mean directly the contrary of what you say; so that you deceive nobody. . . . Therefore, when you are commended for anything, consider fairly, with yourself, whether you deserve it or not; and if you do not deserve it, remember that you are only abused and laughed at, and endeavour to deserve better for the future, and to prevent the irony."

On July 24th, the father writes: "I was pleased with your asking me, the last time I saw you, why I had left off writing, for I looked upon it as a sign that you liked and minded my letters: if that be the case, you shall hear from me often enough; and my letters may be of use if you will give attention to them, otherwise it is only giving myself trouble to no purpose; for it signifies nothing to read a thing once, if one does not mind and remember it. It is a sure sign of a little mind to be doing one thing, and at the same time to be either thinking of another, or not thinking at all. One should always think of what one is about: when one is learning one should not think of play; and when one is at play, one should not think of one's learning." Again: "One of the most important points of life is decency: which is to do what is proper, and where it

* As he afterwards quotes, from Pope:—

"Praise undeserved is satire in disguise."

is proper; for many things are proper at one time and in one place, that are extremely improper in another."

In the next letter comes a disquisition on the nature of verse. On September 10th, the writer sketches the characteristics of geography and history, and on September 15th, insists upon the importance of chronology. On the 17th he returns to a consideration of history more particularly by itself, and, in a following letter, enlarges upon chronology once more. On October 17th, the Earl expresses his belief that Philip Stanhope is the first boy to whom (under the age of eight years) one has ventured to mention the figures of rhetoric, as he did in his last; yet he is of opinion that we cannot begin to think too young, and that the art which teaches us how to persuade the mind, and touch the heart, must surely deserve the earliest attention. "You cannot but be convinced that a man who speaks and writes with elegance and grace, who makes choice of good words, and adorns and embellishes the subject upon which he either speaks or writes, will persuade better and succeed more easily in obtaining what he wishes than a man who does not explain himself clearly, speaks his language ill, or makes use of low and vulgar expressions, and who has neither grace nor elegance in anything that he says. Now it is by rhetoric that the art of speaking eloquently is taught; and, though I cannot think of grounding you in it as yet, I would wish, however, to give you an idea of it suitable to your age. The first thing you should attend to is—to speak whatever language you do speak, in its greatest purity, and according to the rules of grammar; for we must

never offend against grammar, nor make use of words which are not really words. This is not all; for not to speak ill is not sufficient; we must speak well: and the best method of attaining to that is, to read the best authors with attention; and to observe how people of fashion speak, and those who express themselves best."

On October 26th, Chesterfield analyzes some verses by Waller, in order to point out the difference between prose and verse. On the 29th, he writes in French to give his son his first lesson in deportment, and says, "Modesty is a very good quality, and which* generally accompanies true merit: it engages and captivates the minds of people; as, on the other hand, nothing is more shocking and disgustful, than presumption and impudence. We cannot like a man who is always commending and speaking well of himself, and who is the hero of his own story. On the contrary, a man who endeavours to conceal his own merit; who sets that of other people in its true light; who speaks but little of himself, and with modesty: such a man makes a favourable impression upon the understanding of his hearers, and acquires their love and esteem."

Chesterfield is careful, however, to distinguish between modesty and awkward bashfulness, which is, he says, as ridiculous as true modesty is commendable. "It is as absurd to be a simpleton, as to be an impudent fellow; and one ought to know how to come into a room, speak to people, and answer them, without

* A grammatical error which, curiously enough, is to be found in the writings of the most accomplished men of letters.

being out of countenance, or without embarrassment. The English are generally apt to be bashful; and have not those easy, free, and at the same time polite manners, which the French have. A mean fellow, or a country bumpkin, is ashamed when he comes into good company, he appears embarrassed, does not know what to do with his hands, is disconcerted when spoken to, answers with difficulty, and almost stammers; whereas a gentleman, who is used to the world, comes into company with a graceful and proper assurance, speaks even to people he does not know, without embarrassment, and in a natural and easy manner. This is called usage of the world, and good breeding; a most necessary and important knowledge in the intercourse of life. It frequently happens that a man of a great deal of sense, but with little usage of the world, is not so well received as one of inferior parts, but with a gentleman-like behaviour. These are matters worthy your attention; reflect on them, and unite modesty to a polite and easy assurance."

On November 1st, the letter is devoted to "the business of Oratory," which is, it says, "to please people," and "you will easily feel," says Chesterfield, "that to please people is a great step towards persuading them." On November 20th he points how many examples of virtue and magnanimity are afforded by Roman History, and, in the following letter, expresses the hope that, with all the advantages he has, Philip will never be an ignorant man. "There is," he says, "a very pretty French epigram upon the death of such an ignorant, insignificant fellow, the sting of which is, that all that can be said of him is, that he

was once alive, and that he is now dead.* This is the epigram, which you may get off by heart:—

'Colas est mort de maladie.
Tu veux que j'en pleure le sort,
Que diable veux-tu que j'en die?
Colas vivoit, Colas est mort.'

Take care," says Chesterfield, "not to deserve the name of Colas."

I have quoted enough, however, to give the reader an idea of the easy and the desultory manner in which Chesterfield communicated information and advice to his correspondent.† Of course, in the later letters, a

* The reader will remember the celebrated epigram on one of the Guelph princes:—

"Here lies Fred,
Who was alive and is dead;
Had it been his father,
We had much rather;
Had it been his brother,
'Twere well as any other;
Had it been his sister,
We should not have missed her;
But as it is only Fred,
Who was alive and is dead,—
There is no more to be said."

† And yet, according to Mrs. Stanhope, the correspondence was not entirely without system. She says, "The following Letters, the Reader will observe, begin with those dawnings of instruction adapted to the capacity of a Boy, and rising gradually by precepts and monitions, calculated to direct and guard the age of incautious Youth, finish with the advice and knowledge requisite to form the Man, ambitious to shine as an accomplished Courtier, an Orator in the Senate, or a Minister at foreign Courts. In order to effect these purposes, his lordship, ever anxious to fix in his son a scrupulous adherence to the strictest Morality, appears to have thought it the first and most indispensable object to lay, in the earliest period of life, a firm foundation on good Principles and sound Religion. His next point was, to give him a perfect knowledge of the dead Languages, and all the different branches of solid learning, by the Study of the best ancient Authors; and also such a general idea of the Sciences, as it is a disgrace to a Gentleman not to possess." Afterwards, he insisted

higher and less elementary tone is manifest; but the system is throughout the same: the father writes upon just those circumstances and affairs that happen to occur to him, without the slightest touch of pedantry, and with the graceful manner of an accomplished man of the world. The style is admirable, a perfect model of epistolary writing, and more French in its exquisite clearness and pithiness than any other with which I am acquainted. Never before, I suppose, and never since, I am sure, has instruction been imparted in so pleasant a form; and for this reason, if for this alone, the advice of Dr. Johnson should be followed, and the work should be put into the hands of every young man entering life.

There is no need to "take out the immorality," for there is no immorality to take out. There may be plenty of cynicism, if by cynicism we understand an unsparing exposure of the art by which men please and are pleased; but otherwise the tone of the letters is remarkably high, when we consider the times in which they were written, and very high indeed when compared with some of those more recent publications, in which the virtues are inculcated and lauded only so far as they conduce to one's success in life.

"You will find," says Chesterfield, writing in 1740, when his son was eighteen years old, "that virtue consists in doing good, and in speaking truth; that the effects of it are advantageous to all mankind, and

upon the study of "that useful and extensive Science, the Knowledge of Mankind: in the course of which appears the nicest investigation of the Human Heart, and the springs of Human Actions. From hence we find him induced to lay so great a stress on what are generally called Accomplishments, as most indispensably requisite to finish the amiable and brilliant part of a complete Character."

to oneself in particular. Virtue makes us pity and relieve the misfortunes of mankind; it makes us promote justice and good order in society; and, in general, contributes to whatever tends to the real good of mankind. To ourselves it gives an inward comfort and satisfaction, which nothing can rob us of. All other advantages depend upon others, as much as upon ourselves. Riches, power, and greatness may be taken away from us, by the violence and injustice of others, or by inevitable accidents; but virtue depends only upon ourselves, and nobody can take it away from us. Sickness may deprive us of all the pleasures of the body, but it cannot deprive us of our virtue, nor of the satisfaction which we feel from it. A virtuous man, under all the misfortunes of life, still finds an inward comfort and satisfaction, which makes him happier than any wicked man can be, with the other advantages of life."

Could anything be more unexceptionable than that? Suppose that Chesterfield *does* insist, very frequently, upon the necessity of good breeding and politeness. Was his son not especially intended for a diplomatic career, in which these qualities were absolutely essential to success? It should never be forgotten, in judging of a great work of literature, such as the "Letters" are, that it was written under circumstances which determined its aim and form, and that the critic has no right to quarrel with these circumstances. The "Letters" of Lord Chesterfield were written from time to time, amidst the pressure of great public duties, to a boy, and afterwards to a youth, whom he had from his birth indicated for public life, and whom

he therefore sought to indoctrinate with a previous knowledge of the world. "The Letters which Lord Chesterfield wrote to his son, and which contain," says M. Sainte Beuve, "a whole world of *savoir vivre* and worldly science, are interesting in this particular, that there has been no idea of forming a model for imitation, but they are simply intended to bring a pupil into the closest intimacy. They are confidential letters, which, suddenly produced in the light of day"—they were published by his son's widow in 1774, six years after Philip Stanhope's death, and a year after his father's—"have betrayed all the secrets and the ingenious artifices of paternal solicitude."

"If," again, "in reading them nowadays, we are struck with the excessive importance attached to incidental and promiscuous circumstances, with pure details of costume, we are not less struck with the durable part, with that which belongs to human observation in all ages; this last part is much more considerable," says the same able critic, "than at a superficial glance would be imagined." Let me quote a few of those passages which seem to me to show peculiar acuteness, and which fully justify M. Sainte Beuve in calling Chesterfield the Larochefoucauld of England:—

"Almost all people are born with all the passions, to a certain degree, but almost every man has a prevailing one to which the others are subordinate. Search every one for that ruling passion; pry into the recesses of his heart, and observe the different workings of the same passion in different people. And, when you have found out the prevailing passion

of any man, remember never to trust him, where that passion is concerned."'

"Be wiser than other people, if you can, but do not tell them so."

"Individuals forgive sometimes, but bodies and societies never do."

"There is nothing that people bear more impatiently, or forgive less, than contempt; and an injury is much sooner forgiven than an insult."

"Women are much more like each other than men; they have, in truth, but two passions, vanity and love: these are their universal characteristics."

But every page of the "Letters" is full of wisdom; wisdom of the worldly kind, no doubt, but still wisdom. I confess I cannot bring myself to be angry with Mrs. Eugenia Stanhope for giving to the world what was originally only intended for one pair of eyes. It is this that makes the book so very remarkable. What, we may well say, might not Chesterfield have written in this direction, if he had only sat down to put it into an elaborate book! Yet, on the other hand, it is probable that his mind moved more freely in the sphere of private correspondence than it could have possibly done in a more public area. His published essays were elegant in the extreme, but they lack the charm of the "Letters;" they are not so spontaneous, so real, so earnest; nor are they expressed so admirably. And, on the whole, I do not think the lady was too highly paid when she received her £1,500 for the copyright of her father-in-law's correspondence.

The fact that they are so interesting to posterity

would be sufficient to excuse them for their uselessness as regards the person to whom they were addressed. But, for my part, I cannot see that they failed so egregiously to effect their purpose. They did not, certainly, convert Philip Stanhope into a paragon of perfection,—

"The perfect monster that the world ne'er saw."

But they did the best they could with the materials they had at their disposal, and I do not see that they could have done any more. I do not believe for a moment that Lord Chesterfield cherished for his son the extravagant hopes with which Mrs. Oliphant* credits him, or that the result of all his care and teaching was so far below the expectations he had been led to form. "We are not told," says this lady biographer, "by what gradual process the statesman's high hopes were brought down to a certain satisfaction, or pretended satisfaction, with this poor level of possibility. Chesterfield is heroic in his silence; he leaves not a word behind him to express the passionate disappointment, the bitter mortification, which must have been his as he looked on the commonplace figure of which his imagination had made a hero. Neither to the young man himself, nor to any of his correspondents, does he bewail the downfall, or blame the heavy soul which thus resisted all his efforts." How, then, comes Mrs. Oliphant to be cognisant of all this bitter mortification and all this passionate despair? It is in the highest degree improbable that Lord Chesterfield permitted himself to be

* "Historical Sketches of the Reign of George II."

deluded into any such absurdity. He was kept well aware of his son's progress, or want of progress, and I dare say had a very clear idea of the appearances in life he was destined to make. Hence, I believe, his incessant harping upon the necessity of the graces. He knew that Philip had most of the ordinary virtues, and more than the ordinary amount of knowledge, and preferred to insist upon what he did not possess.

Perhaps, indeed, the young man would have been the better if he had not been so prematurely learned. But, apart from that, the verdict passed upon him by his contemporaries is far from unflattering. He was not a brilliant person, and so far was not a credit to the race of Chesterfield. Yet Johnson's Boswell could say of him, "Mr. Stanhope's character has been unjustly represented as being diametrically opposite to what Lord Chesterfield wished him to be. He has been called dull, gross, and awkward; but I knew him at Dresden when he was envoy to that court, and though he could not boast of the graces, he was in fact a sensible, civil, well-behaved man." Besides, he died so young—he was only thirty-six—that it is impossible to say he might not have done something worthy of his father's fame.

As it was, he left behind him a wife and two children, of whose existence the Earl had not been conscious until his son was dead. Then, instead of visiting the bereaved family with his wrath, as so many other fathers would have done, Lord Chesterfield devolved upon his grandchildren the love which he had previously given to his Philip—to the Philip who repaid his kindness by contracting a marriage without his

consent. It is thus that, borne down in his later years by the infirmities of old age, he could write to the two innocent children of his erring son :—

"*To* CHARLES *and* PHILIP STANHOPE.

"I received, a few days ago, two of the best-written letters I ever saw in my life—the one signed Charles Stanhope, the other Philip Stanhope. As for you, Charles, I did not wonder at it, for you will take pains, and are a lover of letters; but you idle rogue, you Phil, how came you to write so well that one can almost say of you two, *Et cantare pares et respondere parati?* Charles will explain this Latin to you.

"I am told, Phil, that you have got a nickname at school, from your intimacy with Master Strangeways, and that they called you Master Strangerways—for to be sure you are a strange boy. Is this true?

"Tell me what you would have me bring both from home, and I will bring it you when I come to town. In the meantime, God bless you both!"

"With this last touch of nature," I can say, with Mrs. Oliphant, "let us wind up the pathetic record. 'Give Dayrolles a chair' were the dying man's last words, they say; and the attendant doctor calls the world to observe that 'his good breeding quitted him only with his life.' But with all deference to established preferences, we believe our readers will conclude with us, that the tender little letter above is a more true conclusion to that strange force of paternal love which lasted as long as Chesterfield's life."

LAMB'S "ESSAYS OF ELIA."

When, in the August of 1820, Charles Lamb began to contribute to the *London Magazine* his "Essays of Elia," he had already obtained some share of distinction as a miscellaneous writer. He had published three sonnets in a volume issued by Coleridge in 1796; he had written the tender and graceful story of "Rosamund Gray;" he had contributed to a book of "Blank Verse," printed by Charles Lloyd in 1799; he had essayed tragedy, though not very successfully, in his play of "John Woodvill;" he had turned the stories of Shakespeare's plays into characteristic prose; and he had given to the world his annotated "Specimens" of those old dramatic poets whom he loved so well. Moreover his "Works" had attained, in 1818, the honour of separate publication, though, as he said, they were in fact his recreations, and his true works were to be found on the shelves of the East India House, Leadenhall Street, filling some hundred folios.

His true work, I venture to think, is not to be found in any of the books I have mentioned, but in the "Essays of Elia." There Lamb shines supreme; there he found just that exact scope and opportunity

which was necessary to bring out his nature in all its exquisite richness.* He had done fairly in poetry; there can be no doubt he had a touch of the poetical spirit; every great writer has—just as every really great writer has at least a *soupçon* of humour. He had done still more fairly in prose, in his Shakespeare stories, publicly, and still more happily in his private letters, which rival his essays in their quaint originality of thought and style. But the time had yet to come, when, within the limits of short papers in a magazine, he should be compelled to concentrate all his wealth of observation and of humorous fancy. Hitherto he had been only feeling his way; now, in the "Essays of Elia," he found exactly that field in which his faculties enabled him to expatiate most freely. He could follow the bent of his inclination, and say, in his own inimitable way, whatever came uppermost in his fertile mind.

It was not as if Lamb had regarded the Essay, as so many now regard it, in the light of a treatise in which the writer goes about solemnly to prove some edifying and tremendous proposition. It is the great charm of the "Essays of Elia" that they are so entirely egotistical;† that while, to be sure, they have their particular subjects, their interest is derived more from the writer than from the topic he writes on;

* Lord Lytton, "Miscellaneous Works," i. 120.

† "His essays, like his sonnets, are reflections of his own feelings. And so, I think, should essays generally be. A history or sketch of science, or a logical effort, may help the reader some way up the ladder of learning, but they do not link themselves with his affections. I myself," says Mr. Procter, "prefer the affections to the sciences. The story of the heart is the deepest of all histories; and Shakespeare is profounder and longer-lived than Maclaurin or Malthus or Ricardo."

and that so far from being, as a treatise should be, methodical and premeditated in form and treatment, they are as eccentric in arrangement as in matter, and as characteristic in the style as in the thoughts. They fulfil the two leading requirements of all literature that can hope to live: they are unique and perfect, and their unique and their perfect character is owing to the fact that their creator was himself unique and perfect in his way. You cannot imagine another Charles Lamb. You can imagine another Hazlitt with less difficulty, and there is no reason why Leigh Hunt should not be reproduced under similar circumstances; but we cannot hope again for the combination that produced our "Elia," and therefore we cannot hope for another such series of such essays.

The "Essays of Elia" are the mature outcome of a mind which, essentially humorous in fibre, had had to pass through trials which threatened to overcome that mind with melancholy. Everybody knows the story of Charles Lamb and his imbecile father; of the sister who, in a moment of insanity, killed the mother, and who was ever afterwards subject to attacks of that terrible evil. "To protect and save this sister—a gentle woman who had watched like a mother over his own infancy—the whole length of his life was devoted. What he endured, through the space of nearly forty years, from the incessant fear and frequent recurrence of his sister's insanity, can now only be conjectured. In this constant and uncomplaining endurance, and in his steady adherence to a great principle of conduct, his life was heroic." He had probably some slight taint of madness himself—a

very slight taint indeed, but just enough to give the peculiar turn of thought that is observable in his writings. Certainly the effects of his father's and his sister's malady were upon him all his life, and had much to do in forming that state of mind in which he produced his "Essays."

There we observe, I say, an originally rollicking humour struggling against a load of melancholy that threatens to extinguish it; and the result is such a combination of quaintness and simplicity and tenderness and fun and fancy, as has never before been seen in literature. It is as different as possible from the humour of Steele, of which geniality is the essence; or the humour of Addison, of which refinement is the principal characteristic. It is not overflowing like Fielding's, or saturnine like Smollett's, or sardonic like Swift's, or sentimental like Sterne's. It is, as I say, unique and perfect of its kind; so unique and so perfect that the "Essays of Elia"—the record of the thoughts and fancies of a poor East India House clerk—form one of the most famous books in the language, and will live, I dare say, as long as, if not longer than, any of those masterpieces of which I have already treated. They will always live in the memory of men of culture. They are not, indeed, calculated to attract the ordinary reader; but we will hope that as the years go by, culture will spread as rapidly as wealth accumulates, and that Charles Lamb will be read by everybody who can read at all.

The "Essays of Elia" *should* be studied if only for the light they throw on the circumstances of the life of their author. Never were essays more rich in auto-

biographical matter than those of Elia's; not even Montaigne is more garrulous about himself, his friends, and his opinions.* And first, about himself: he opens the essay on the "Old Benchers of the Inner Temple" by saying, "I was born and passed the first seven years of my life in the Temple. Its church, its gardens, its fountains, its river, I had almost said—for in those young years, what was this king of rivers to me but a stream that watered our pleasant places?—these are my oldest recollections." He then goes on, by-and-by, to sketch the figure of old Samuel Salt, whose confidential clerk Lamb's father was, and of whom, of course, Lamb entertained very lively recollections. When seven or eight years old the boy became a scholar of Christ's Hospital, and of that venerable establishment the man has left a description, in his "Essays," which is very interesting in the information it affords us about Lamb's school-days. This and another, not included in the "Elia" series, show, when read together, the different (favourable or unfavourable) points of this famous institution,† which seems to have added another to the many elements of gloom which already surrounded the poor boy's life. "I was a hypochondriac lad," says Lamb; and his hypochondria was not likely to be decreased so long as he remained within the bounds of the sad hospital, where hunger was a not uncommon affliction, and where he had continually to witness the cruelty

* The reader must be careful, however, to distinguish between the real and the fictitious autobiography, for Lamb was fond of mystifying his public in this way, and frequently speaks in the person of another. For instance, the poor boy, in the essay on "Christ's Hospital," who has such cheerless, homeless holidays, is not Lamb, but Coleridge.

† Barry Cornwall's "Memoir of Charles Lamb."

with which his schoolfellows would treat each other. He was only happy when, in common with the rest, he obtained "whole-day leaves," and merrily sallied forth into the fields, "to strip under the first warmth of the sun, and wanton like young dace in the streams." Yet it was at Christ's Hospital that he first enjoyed the friendship, among others, of the poet Coleridge, of whom he gives us many pleasing glimpses. "Come back in memory," he says, "like as thou wert in the day-spring of thy fancies, with hope like a fiery column before thee—the dark pillar not yet turned—Samuel Taylor Coleridge, logician, metaphysician, bard! How have I seen the casual passer through the cloisters stand still, entranced with admiration (while he weighed the disproportion between the *speech* and the *garb* of the young Mirandula), to hear thee unfold, in thy deep and sweet intonations, the mysteries of Jamblicus or Plotinus (for even in those years thou waxedst not pale at such philosophic draughts), or reciting Homer in his Greek, or Pindar, while the walls of the old Grey Friars re-echoed to the accents of the *inspired charity-boy!*" It was something to have been a scholar at Christ's Hospital, if only to have made the life-long acquaintance of so exquisite, if unstable, a genius as that of the author of the "Ancient Mariner."

Of the South Sea House, where Lamb afterwards passed a short time under the control of his brother John, who had a clerkship there, some account is given in another essay; but his most familiar memories gathered round the accountant's office of the East India Company, in Leadenhall Street, where he

obtained a clerkship in 1792, when he was seventeen years of age, and where he remained in the same capacity until the beginning of 1825, when he was fifty years old. He himself tells the story of his release from drudgery in his essay, "The Superannuated Man," which is otherwise full of the most charmingly interesting autobiography. He tells how, independently of the rigours of attendance, he had ever been haunted with a sense (perhaps, he says, a mere caprice, and such undoubtedly it was) of incapacity for business. This, during his latter years, had increased to such a degree that it was visible in all the lines of his countenance. His health and his good spirits flagged. He had perpetually a dread of some crisis to which he should be found unequal. Besides his daily servitude, he served over again in his sleep, and would wake with terrors of imaginary false entries, errors in his accounts, and the like. He was, as I have said, fifty years of age, and no prospect of emancipation presented itself. "I had grown to my desk, as it were, and the wood had entered into my soul." Suddenly he received an awful summons to attend the presence of the directors* in what he calls the "formidable back parlour." He thought that now his time had surely come, that he had done for himself, that he was going to be told that they had no longer any occasion for his services. "L—, I could see, smiled at the terror I was in, which was a little relief to me, when, to my utter astonishment, B—, the eldest partner, began a formal harangue to me on the length of my services, my very meritorious

* Described in the essay as "a firm."

conduct during the whole of the time (the deuce, thought I, how did he find out that? I protest I never had the confidence to think as much). He went on to descant on the expediency of retiring at a certain time of life (how my heart panted!), and, asking me a few questions as to the amount of my own property, of which I have a little, ended with a proposal, to which his three partners nodded a grave assent, that I should accept from the house, which I had served so well, a pension for life to the amount of two-thirds of my accustomed salary*—a magnificent offer! I do not know what I answered, between surprise and gratitude, but it was understood that I accepted their proposal, and I was told that I was free from that hour to leave their service. I stammered out a bow, and at just ten minutes before eight I went home—for ever. . . . For the first day or two," he says, "I felt stunned, overwhelmed. I could only apprehend my felicity; I was too confused to taste it sincerely. I wandered about, thinking I was happy, and knowing I was not. I was in the condition of a prisoner in the old Bastile, suddenly let loose after a forty years' confinement. I could scarcely trust myself with myself. It was like passing out of time into eternity, for it is a sort of eternity for a man to have his time all to himself. It seemed to me that I had more time on my hands than I could ever manage."

At one period of his career, Lamb added to his salary by concocting pleasantries for the morning journals, and he has recorded his experiences in this way in his essay on "Newspapers Thirty-five Years

* That is, £400.

Ago." "In those days," he says, "every Morning Paper, as an essential retainer to its establishment, kept an author, who was bound to furnish daily a quantum of witty paragraphs. Sixpence a joke—and it was thought pretty high, too—was Dan Stuart's* settled remuneration in these cases. The chat of the day, scandal, but, above all, *dress*, furnished the material. The length of no paragraph was to exceed seven lines. Shorter they might be, but they must be poignant. . . . Somebody has said, that to swallow six cross-buns daily, consecutively for a fortnight, would surfeit the stoutest digestion. But to have to furnish so many jokes daily, and that not for a fortnight, but for a long twelvemonth, as we were constrained to do, was a little harder exertion. . . . No Egyptian task-master ever devised a slavery like to that, our slavery. . . . Half-a-dozen jests in a day (bating Sundays, too), why it seems nothing! We make twice the number every day of our lives as a matter of course, and claim no Sabbatical exemptions. But then they come into our head. But when the head has to go out to them—when the mountain must go to Mahomet—Reader, try it for once, only for one short twelvemonth."

But to collect all the personal references to Lamb and to Lamb's friends, from the pages of "Elia," would be to occupy more space than I can possibly spare. Let me only glance for a moment at some of the more striking and characteristic of the Essays, especially those which illustrate Lamb's quaint humour and peculiar views.

* Daniel Stuart, editor of the *Morning Chronicle*.

Who does not remember the famous essay on "Mrs. Battle's Opinions on Whist?" "'A clear fire, a clean hearth, and the rigour of the game.' This was the celebrated *wish* of old Sarah Battle (now with God), who, next to her devotions, loved a good game of whist. She was none of your lukewarm gamesters, your half-and-half-players, who have no objection to take a hand, if you want one to make up a rubber; who affirm that they have no pleasure in winning; that they like to win one game and lose another; that they can while away an hour very agreeably at a card-table, but are indifferent whether they play or no; and will desire an adversary who has slipped a wrong card, to take it up and play another. These insufferable trifles are the curse of a table. One of these flies will spoil a whole pot. Of such it may be said that they do not play at cards, but only play at playing at them. Sarah Battle was none of that breed. . . . She loved a thorough-paced partner, a determined enemy. She took, and gave, no concessions. She hated favours. She never made a revoke, nor ever passed it over in an enemy without exacting the utmost forfeiture. She fought a good fight: cut and thrust. . . . I never in my life—and I knew Sarah Battle many of the best years of it—saw her take out her snuff-box when it was her turn to play; or snuff a candle in the middle of a game; or ring for a servant, till it was fairly over. She never introduced, or connived at, miscellaneous conversation during its process. As she emphatically observed, cards were cards; and if I ever saw unmingled distaste in her fine last-century countenance, it was at the airs of a young gentleman of a

literary turn, who had been with difficulty persuaded to take a hand; and who, in his excess of candour declared, that he thought there was no harm in unbending the mind now and then, after serious studies, in recreations of that kind! She could not bear to have her noble occupation, to which she wound up all her faculties, considered in that light. It was her business, her duty, the thing she came into the world to do;—and she did it. She unbent her mind afterwards over a book."

Who has not known many a Sarah Battle, of both sexes, each and all of whom have regarded a game of whist as one which involved the most solemn responsibilities on the part of its votaries?

Who, again, does not remember the delightful "Chapter on Ears," which Lamb begins, quasi-sensationally, by saying that "he has no ear?" It is not that he was "by nature destitute of those exterior twin appendages, hanging ornaments, and (architecturally speaking) handsome volutes to the human capital." Quite the reverse. He was, he thought, "rather delicately than copiously provided with those conduits." When he said he had no ears, we were to understand him to mean *for music*. *Sentimentally*, indeed, he was disposed to harmony, but *organically* he was incapable of a tune. "I have been practising," he says, "'God Save the King' all my life, whistling and humming it over to myself in solitary corners; and yet am not yet arrived, they tell me, within many quavers of it. Yet hath the loyalty of Elia never been impeached. I am not without suspicion," he goes on to say, "that I have

an undeveloped faculty of music within me. For thrumming, in my wild way on my friend A.'s piano, the other morning, while he was engaged in an adjoining parlour,—on his return he was pleased to say, *'he thought it could not be the maid!'* On his first surprise at hearing the keys touched in somewhat an airy and masterful way, not dreaming of me, his suspicions had lighted upon *Jenny*. But a grace, snatched from a superior refinement, soon convinced him that some being—technically perhaps deficient but higher informed upon a principle common to all the fine arts—had swayed the keys to a mood which Jenny, with all her (less cultivated) enthusiasm, could never have elicited from them. I mention this," says Lamb, "as a proof of my friend's penetration, and not with any view of disparaging Jenny."

In the essay on "All Fools' Day," he says he would give a trifle to know, historically and authentically, who was the greatest fool that ever lived, and proceeds to apostrophize some distinguished individuals in a very free-and-easy manner:—"Good Master Empedocles,* you are welcome. It is long since you went a-salamander-gathering down Ætna. Worse than samphire-picking by some odds. 'Tis a mercy your worship did not singe your moustachios. Ha, Cleombrotus! and what salads, in faith, did you light upon at the bottom of the Mediterranean? You were founder, I think, of the disinterested sect of the Calenturists.—Gebir, my old free-mason, and prince of plasterers at Babel, bring in your trowel, most ancient Gaul! You have a

* The hero, it will be remembered, of a fine poem by Mr. Matthew Arnold.

claim to sit here at my right hand, as patron of the stammerers. . . . What, the magnanimous Alexander in tears? Cry, baby; put its finger in its eye. It shall have another globe, round as an orange, pretty moppet!—Good Master Raymund Lully, you look wise. Pray correct that error.—Duns, spare your definition. I must fine you a bumper, or a paradox. We will have nothing said or done syllogistically this day. Remove those logical forms, waiter, that no gentleman break the tender shins of his apprehension, stumbling across them." "I love a *fool*," says Lamb, characteristically, a little farther on; "as naturally, as if I were kith and kin to him."

He contrived to extract delicious fun out of "a Quakers' meeting," and had to answer for it to his good friend Bernard Barton, the poet, who was of that persuasion. But more famous still is the paper, originally headed, "Jews, Quakers, Scotchmen, and other Imperfect Sympathies," now more correctly and simply headed, "Imperfect Sympathies," in which he gives an amusing description of the difficulty he always had in getting on with Scotchmen, Jews, and Quakers. Of Scotchmen, his humorous dislike was such that he said they ought to have double punishment, fire without brimstone; and his analysis of the national character will always be remembered for its combined quaintness and acuteness. "There is," he says, "an order of imperfect intellects (under which mine must be content to rank) which in its constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian. The owners of the sort of faculties I allude to, have minds rather suggestive than comprehensive. They have no pretence to much clearness or precision

in their ideas, or in their manner of expressing them. Their intellectual wardrobe (to confess fairly) has few whole pieces in it. They are content with fragments and scattered pieces of Truth. She presents no full front to them—a feature or side-face at the most. Hints and glimpses, germs and crude essays at a system, is the utmost they can pretend to. They beat up a little game peradventure, and leave it to knottier heads, more robust constitutions, to run it down. The light that lights them is not steady and polar, but mutable and shifting; waxing, and again waning. Their conversation is accordingly. They will throw out a random word in or out of season, and be content to let it pass for what it is worth. They cannot speak always as if they were upon their oath, but must be understood, speaking or writing, with some abatement. They seldom wait to mature a proposition, but e'en bring it to market in the green ear. They delight to impart their defective discoveries as they arise, without waiting for their full development. They are no systematizers, and would but err more by attempting it. The brain of a true Caledonian (if I am not mistaken) is constituted upon quite a different plan. His Minerva is born in panoply. You are never admitted to see his ideas in their growth—if, indeed, they do grow, and are not rather put together upon the principle of clockwork. You never catch his mind in undress. He never hints or suggests anything, but unlades his stock of ideas in perfect order and completeness. He brings his total wealth into company, and gravely unpacks it. His riches are always about him. . . . . You never witness his first apprehension of a thing. His under-

standing is always at its meridian; you never see the first dawn, the early streaks. He has no falterings of self-suspicion. Surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, have no place in his brain, or his vocabulary. The twilight of dubiety never falls upon him. Is he orthodox—he has no doubts. Is he an infidel—he has none either. Between the affirmative and the negative there is no border-land with him. You cannot hover with him on the confines of truth, or wander in the maze of a probable argument."

I am afraid I ought to conclude with this admirable specimen of Lamb at his best; but I cannot leave so many of his best essays so much as unreferred to. Shall I stop without allusion to the charming paper on "Valentine's Day," in which he speaks of the postman sinking beneath a load of "delicate embarrassments, not his own," and tells the touching story about E. B. and *his* valentine; to that in which he discourses of his relations; to that in which he chats about Bridget Elia and Mackery End; to that in which he speaks of the first plays he witnessed; or to that in which he refuses to believe in modern gallantry, until he sees Dorimant hand a fish-wife across a kennel, or assist the apple-woman to pick up her wandering fruit, which some unlucky dray just dissipated? There is that characteristic one in which he objects to graces before meat as awkward and unseasonable, and asks why there are none for books, those spiritual repasts—a grace before Milton, a grace before Shakespeare, a devotional exercise proper to be said before reading the "Faery

Queen." There is "Dream Children: a Reverie," with its charming autobiographical allusions. There is that in praise of chimney-sweepers, and that complaining of the decay of beggars in the metropolis. In another he explains the origin of roast pig, and describes the dish with a gusto full of genuine and unparalleled humour. He devotes a paper to complaining, as a bachelor, of the behaviour of married people before company, especially of their excessive pride in one another, and of their attitude which seems to say to man or woman, as the case may be, "You have lost your chance of being the proprietor of *me!*" He revels in his recollections of old actors; he is at home in his loving disquisition on the artificial comedy of the last century. There is that inimitable character of the poor relation, too long and too familiar to be quoted; and there are those thoroughly Lambish thoughts on books and readings, which include so many felicitous and original judgments, and in which he is so particular about the bindings of his books, and so precise as to the *when* and *where* in which books should be read. Everybody remembers "The Old Margate Hoy," and the essay in which Lamb contends for the perfect sanity of true genius, declaring that the greatest wits will ever be found to be the sanest writers.

It was in August, 1820, that (as already stated) Lamb began to contribute to the pages of the *London Magazine*, which had been established in that year by its publishers, Messrs. Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy. "Never," says Talfourd, "was a periodical work commenced with happier auspices, numbering a list of contributors more original in thought, more fresh in

spirit, more sportive in fancy, or directed by an editor better qualified by nature and study to preside, than this *London*. There was Lamb, with humanity ripened among town-bred experiences, and pathos matured by sorrow, at his wisest, sagest, airiest, *in*discreetest, best; Barry Cornwall, in the first bloom of his modest and enduring fame, streaking the darkest passion with beauty; John Hamilton Reynolds, lighting up the wildest eccentricities and most striking features of many-coloured life with vivid fancy; and, with others of less note, Hazlitt, whose pen, unloosed from the chain which earnest thought and metaphysical dreamings had woven, gave radiant expression to the results of the solitary musings of many years."

The origin of Lamb's signature of "Elia" is thus explained by the same writer. Its adoption, he says, was purely accidental. His first contribution to the magazine was the description of the old South Sea House, to which I have already referred, and, remembering the name of a gay, light-hearted foreigner, who fluttered there during Lamb's short novitiate as a clerk, he subscribed his name to the essay. It was afterwards affixed to subsequent contributions, and Lamb used it until, in his "Last Essays of Elia," he bade it a sad farewell.

This was in 1833, when the "Last Essays" were published in a complete form, with a characteristic preface. The first series had extended over rather more than two years, between August, 1820, and October, 1822, and was first collected in 1823. The second series was begun in May, 1824, and continued

written very heartily. "Some men's brains," says Lamb, "can bear only one skimming;" and he did not do his work so *con amore* as before. The preface purports to be composed "by a friend of the late Elia," who "for some months past" is said to have "been in a declining way," and had "at length paid his final tribute to nature." "To say truth," says Lamb, "it was time he were gone. The humour of the thing, if it ever had much in it, was pretty well exhausted; and a two years and a half existence has been a tolerable duration for a phantom." Thus modestly, says Mr. Procter, does he speak of essays which have delighted all cultivated readers.



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